

# **LWF Studies**

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REPORTS AND TEXTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDIES

## **PEACE AND JUSTICE TOWARD AN ECUMENICAL PEACE ETHIC**

MARCH 1990



**PEACE AND JUSTICE  
TOWARD AN ECUMENICAL PEACE ETHIC**

**REPORT ON A CONSULTATION HELD BY  
THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION**

*edited by Götz Planer-Friedrich*

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# CONTENTS

	<b>Preface</b>	
	<i>Gunnar Staalsett</i> . . . . .	5
1.	<b>The Theology of Just Peace - An Ecumenical Task</b>	
	<i>Götz Planer-Friedrich</i> . . . . .	8
2.	<b>Peace Ethics and Peace Church - the Debate in Europe</b>	
	<i>Trond Bakkevig</i> . . . . .	29
3.	<b>Peace through Justice in the South African Context</b>	
	<i>Alex Bhiman</i> . . . . .	32
4.	<b>Ways of Justice in a Journey to Peace</b>	
	<i>Vitor Westhelle</i> . . . . .	45
5.	<b>Peace through Justice</b>	
	<i>Sibusiso Bengu</i> . . . . .	63
6.	<b>Ethical and Theological Arguments for Peace: An Examination of the Roman Catholic and Methodist Statements on Peace</b>	
	<i>Marcia Bunge</i> . . . . .	72
7.	<b>The Contribution of the Orthodox Church to the Establishment of Peace and Justice</b>	
	<i>Athanasios Basdekis</i> . . . . .	93
8.	<b>The Rejection of the Spirit, Logic and Practice of the System of Deterrence as a Contribution to a Theology of Just Peace</b>	
	<i>Helmut Zeddies</i> . . . . .	107
9.	<b>Peace and Justice and the Structure of the Church</b>	
	<i>Heinz-Günther Stobbe</i> . . . . .	135
10.	<b>Confessionality and Contextuality</b>	
	<b>Report on the Consultation Including Three Reports from the Working Group</b>	
	<i>Götz Planer-Friedrich</i> . . . . .	156
11.	<b>List of Participants</b> . . . . .	209

## PREFACE

*Gunnar Staalsett*

Today, as never before in history, the words "peace" and "justice" express both the legitimate concern as regards the future of humankind as well as the hope for change. There are good reasons for being concerned about the state of the world. The gap between the poor and the rich has increased rather than decreased. The so-called Third World has to carry the burden of a debt amounting to approximately 1,200 billion dollars which by now threatens the survival of whole nations and states. Under the pressure of creditors and their institutions, social benefits are being drastically reduced. In many places the progressively ruinous exploitation of natural resources as well as a rapid destruction of the environment can be observed in many places. At the same time the annual expenditure for military armaments has increased to approximately 1,000 billion dollars. The arms' race, militarization, economic injustice and the violation of human rights go hand in hand.

A singular danger emanates from weapons of nuclear mass destruction. "The unrivaled irony of the nuclear armaments race is that it reveals the deadly potential of power as bringing death" (according to Matthew Lamb, in Hans Küng/David Tracy, *Theologie wohin? Gütersloh*, 1984). However, peace is not only threatened by weapons. Wherever justice is abused, violence accelerates. Thus those who want to promote peace, must stand up for justice.

This realization is as old as the psalms and the prophets of ancient Israel. In the Old Testament, the unity of justice and peace is expressed by the word "shalom". Although this in fact refers to the spiritual relationship of the God of Israel with his people,



it is always given a social and political dimension especially in the words of the prophets. When we speak of a theology of just peace we are talking about precisely this unity of spirituality and social responsibility.

With its statement on peace and justice in 1985 the Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Federation affirmed its intention "in accordance with resolutions of the Seventh Assembly in Budapest 1984, to intensify ecumenical action for peace, justice and human rights". The consultation on "Theology of Just Peace" held in December 1987 in Bad Boll at which theologians from various churches and regions participated should be seen as supporting this aim.

This publication shows that the theological discussion must reflect the contextuality of the problem. The different contexts in which our faith must express itself and prove its worth exercise a certain influence on the emphasis of theological reflection. The common theological heritage, which unites the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, does not guarantee that the same answers to the question of the survival of humanity are found in the North, South, East and West. The degree of concern - which varies from region to region - over the needs and dangers of our time necessitates a dialogue on the prerequisites and practical consequences of a theology of just peace.

Upon listening to the theological arguments of and insights gained in other Christian traditions we not only experience an enrichment to our perspective, but must also deal with the critical objections regarding our self-understanding. The consensus that we have reached in the doctrinal conversations between the LWF and other churches and confessions must still stand the test both practically and theologically by jointly standing up for justice and peace.

Hence several strands of the Lutheran World Federation's ecumenical commitment meet in this study process. With that it can also be integrated into the "conciliar process for justice, peace

and the integrity of creation" of the World Council of Churches. The contents of this publication should therefore be seen as a contribution to this process.

A process which by nature is as complex as this one will never reach a definite conclusion and this book does not claim to be the end product of our theological efforts. It should be regarded as marking a certain phase in the necessary ecumenical communication. It wants readers to actively take part and to encourage their participation in the conciliar process.

# THE THEOLOGY OF JUST PEACE - AN ECUMENICAL TASK

*Götz Planer Friedrich*

## I.

In recent years church organizations as well as Christian congregations have been preoccupied with the call for an Ecumenical Peace Council. This proposal was made as early as 1983 by the GDR delegation at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver. It was followed by a corresponding appeal by the German scholar Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker at the Protestant Kirchentag in 1984, where it was mainly endorsed by the German Protestant churches in East and West. It was explicitly supported by a resolution of the LWF Executive Committee in 1985.<sup>1</sup>

The World Council of Churches advocates a "conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation" which should lead to a world conference in 1990. In October 1986 Pope John Paul II summoned representatives of all churches and faiths to a prayer for peace in Assisi. It is difficult to foresee how these various responses and actions will relate to one another. However, certain experiences and insights may be helpful:

1. To begin with, the very term "Council" poses a problem that might be an obstacle to the ecumenical aims. Thus C.F. v. Weizsäcker now speaks of a "World Convocation of Christians".<sup>2</sup> The significance of such a convocation will depend on the spirituality of its decisions and their reception by Christianity worldwide.

2. The churches of the so-called Third World are concerned that by limiting the theme of such a council to the peace issue their perils and needs might well be disregarded. Today's unjust economic situation causes annually many deaths in the South from



starvation as there were war casualties during the six years of the Second World War. It is thus vital that the churches bear in mind the biblical unity of *pax et iustitia*, if, in accordance with their mission, they wish to do justice to the real threat to humankind.

3. The representation of the various churches at a "Council" would no doubt give rise to controversies with regard to ecclesiology and church or canonical law. Hence, since 1971 the World Council of Churches<sup>3</sup> uses the term "conciliarity" by which is meant the road that is to lead to ecumenical unity.<sup>4</sup> The term conciliarity describes a kind of rapprochement through communication. The question whether this can in the end lead to an Ecumenical Council remains open. Accordingly, the World Council of Churches has opted for a "conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation".<sup>5</sup>

4. At the same time, the World Council of Churches envisages the establishment of a network of "mutual covenants" that would make visible the goal of the conciliar process. Its aim is not merely to establish a particular ecumenical structure to knit the various "social forms" of the church more tightly together.<sup>6</sup> Also, it wishes to ensure from the beginning that Christian witness for peace will in fact go beyond individual ethical decisions and reach the ecclesial community as a whole.

5. The World Council of Churches' emphasis on the element of action in the Christian witness for peace could be a belated after-effect of the much quoted ecumenical formula: Doctrine separates but service unites. In the course of the ecumenical movement, however, this formula has not been proven to be true. Despite different doctrinal traditions the churches' statements on the urgent questions faced today by humankind have much in common. In spite of this, however, it remains debatable, and even controversial, what actual authority these statements have and what value they are to be given in the churches' tradition of faith and the ecumenical movement.

All the problems and questions raised here are of course interrelated. Yet each one of them has to be treated separately and this calls for a division of labor along ecumenical lines. The Department of Studies of the LWF, supported by the Commission on Studies, has resolved to conduct a theological in-depth study of the ecumenical peace task. Under the theme, "A Theology of Just Peace," it hoped to contribute to the formulation of a theological foundation for a conciliar peace ethic of the churches. The study did not disown the Lutheran doctrinal tradition, but rather, critically examined it in the light of the new situation of the world. Above all, it sought dialogue and understanding with those other churches which have taken a firm position on this issue.

With this project the Department of Studies is taking up the call for an ecumenical peace ethic as formulated at a consultation held in Chavanod in 1982. At that time, Armin Boyens said that the road away from the just war doctrine would lead to a doctrine of just peace.<sup>7</sup>

One of the main tasks of a first consultation, held in December 1987 at the Evangelische Akademie Bad Boll/FRG, was to examine church statements with regard to their theological and ethical line of reasoning.

As a first step we have tried to illustrate this methodological approach and shall now as a further step look for a common denominator in diversity, or for the compatibility of the diverging elements; finally we will try to outline an initial ecumenical peace ethic that is in keeping with the claims of the biblical shalom - the unity of justice and peace.

## II.

It must be rated a success of the ecumenical movement that the churches' positions on social-ethical issues are increasingly being noted with interest on the part of other churches and church communions. All too frequently, however, they are read and used either as a mere confirmation or contradiction of one's own posi-



tion. What is necessary is that the commonalities are noted even where they do not lead to the same result or the question is raised what could have lead to such differences in the final verdict.

The memorandum of the Evangelical Church in Germany EKD entitled "The Preservation, Promotion and Renewal of Peace"<sup>8</sup> states: "The political meaning of the peace mandate is the affirmation of life in community between people and nations" (pp. 36f.). It argues that making or safeguarding peace is a political rather than a military task (pp. 36ff.). In so doing the memorandum's theological and ethical arguments do not go beyond those of the Heidelberg Theses in 1959, and it is for this reason that they are appended to the memorandum. They had formulated a provisional ethics that recognized deterrence through nuclear arms "still" to be "a possible Christian way of acting today" (Eighth Thesis). The aim, however, was that "war must be abolished by persistent and progressive effort" (Third Thesis). At the same time, both the refusal to take up arms and armed service were declared to be complementary and thus acceptable Christian options.

In 1981, the EKD had not come significantly nearer to that goal. It affirms that "participation in the attempt to safeguard peace in freedom by the presence of nuclear weapons" must be recognized "as *still* being a possible Christian way of acting today" (p. 42, author's emphasis). The memorandum then turns this "still" against the church itself claiming it could have done, and still has to do, more to overcome it and thereby the policy of deterrence as such (pp. 42-43).

The 1984 Statement on Peace and Politics of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) begins as follows: "Politics is the task of protecting and caring for the common life. Thus peace is the basis, sense and goal of politics. The Creator is present in the politics of peace."<sup>9</sup> This is very reminiscent of the message of the EKD memorandum and evokes associations to the 5th Barmen Thesis ("... that in the as yet unredeemed world in

which the church also exists, the state has by divine appointment the task of providing. [It fulfills this task] by means of the threat and exercise of force according to the measure of human judgment and human ability"). In the LCA statement, however, the task of protecting the common life refers in the first instance to one's own society that needs to be protected against any threats from the outside. Therefore it reaches the following conclusion: despite the fact that nuclear deterrence "involves us all in a sinful situation from which none are exempt ... nuclear deterrence remains of the present time as the lesser of evils" (p. 7). In this the conclusion strikingly concurs with the EKD memorandum.

Richard P. Hordern considers the LCA statement to be "an uncritical divine blessing to current US foreign policy".<sup>10</sup> It would seem though that this assessment is solely based on the outcome. The theological reasoning of the statement would be different, were the task of protecting the common life not narrowed down to a nation-state level, which Hordern justifiably criticizes. Nevertheless there are signs in the statement of a critical position towards present US politics. Thus, the distinction between absolute good and absolute evil is rejected on theological grounds (p. 6), and the relationship between economic injustice and the arms race is commented as follows: "there can be no global security without serious progress against poverty and economic injustice" (ibid.). Unfortunately, these insights are not applied in reaching the final conclusions.

The theological foundation for the United Methodist bishops' peace statement is already indicated in its title, "In Defense of Creation".<sup>11</sup> The document is based on the premise that at least three of the seven principles that qualify the just war theory in ethical terms must lead to a clear "no" to nuclear war and the use of nuclear weapons (p. 34).

This "no" is positively supplemented by a "yes" to God's shalom that embraces all human beings - not only Christians. It challenges us to develop a "new theology for a just peace" (p. 13). In this context, however, the doctrine of deterrence needs to be



demythologized, as it were: "Deterrence has too long been revered as the unquestioned idol of national security" (p. 46). The document continues: "It is the idolatrous connection between the ideology of deterrence and the existence of the weapons themselves that must be broken" (p. 48).

Here the turning away from the doctrine of deterrence is understood as being the conversion from the false god of security to the true God of creation. Despite this rather pointed confessional formulation the document does include a number of very rational reasons for the reflection on security to be redirected by means of arguments going beyond the boundaries set by the church. What is theologically important is the rejection of idolatry, for this is the most deeply rooted cause of injustice, hunger, persistent conventional wars and the violation of human rights - as the Methodist peace paper tries to make plausible.

This form of theological argumentation is reminiscent of the call to confession in the peace issue, made by the Board (Moderamen) of the Reformed Alliance in the FRG.<sup>12</sup> What is even more marked is the association to the "no to the spirit, logic (and practice) of deterrence" as issued to different degrees in the various texts by the Synod of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR in 1982. The almost liturgical formula recalls the act of baptism with its denial of the devil and all his works.

Not only in a liturgical but also in a theological sense this type of rejection stands between repentance and confession; it is an element of the conversion process in its dialectics of denial and acceptance. What shape the latter is to take, however, remains for the time being still a task for the GDR churches. This was openly stated by the Synod in its first resolution in 1982. "The consequences that this will have for us are not as yet clear to us."<sup>13</sup> Hence the GDR churches have always tried to provide a positive complement to this rejection in the form of a politically viable alternative in their thinking on security. For instance, they have used the concept of common security that is also specifically mentioned in the American Methodist bishops' statement, "In Defense of Creation".<sup>14</sup>

The just war theory is taken up in great detail in the Pastoral Letter of the US Roman Catholic bishops<sup>15</sup>. Three years later this line of reasoning is explicitly adopted by the Methodist bishops, although, as already mentioned, it is more radical in its implementation. Well-worth noting in the document of the US Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference is the reference to early Christian pacifism and to its presence throughout the churches' history (paras 111ff.). The ethical consequence of this is that Christians have to set an example to resist injustice through non-violent methods (para 116). This attitude is surprising because of its closeness to views prevailing in the historical peace churches.<sup>16</sup>

On the whole, the arguments of the Roman Catholic peace document consist of interpretations and comments on authorized documents and papal statements. This limits the tasks of the bishops in as far as they fulfill their teaching assignment.<sup>17</sup> The statement admits that a number of Roman Catholic Christians would have called for a "prophetic challenge to the community of faith" (para 198) that goes beyond the doctrine of deterrence. However, the bishops did not feel in a position to do this, because as teachers in their church they felt obligated merely to a careful examination of the moral criteria. As a result the doctrine of deterrence is not wholly rejected although parts are strongly criticized and declared to be "still" acceptable provided a number of restrictions are observed. With this the US Catholic bishops in fact go further than the EKD memorandum because if one puts together their careful criticism of deterrence and the criteria limiting it, it becomes apparent that they feel that the system as now represented by the USA is morally unsound and politically unacceptable.

In their almost scholarly precision the US Catholic bishops differ from their West German colleagues, who in 1983 in a pastoral letter paid tribute to their teaching authority on the same question.<sup>18</sup> Although their letter is to be seen as an interpreta-



tion of the church's teaching on peace, it is much more caught up in the ideological East-West conflict, as is shown for instance in the very cautious way it accepts nuclear deterrence not even calling for it to be a temporal solution only.

On 7 February 1986 the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church published a rather extensive message "on war and peace in a nuclear age."<sup>19</sup>

The Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union, too, works on the principle of protecting life on earth (I.I, 2.15). Since a nuclear war cannot be limited (2.20) and the arms race and deterrence have already had a number of negative repercussions (i.e., no progress in the developing countries, damage to the ecology), the document resolutely pleads for disarmament and only temporarily for an arms balance. No mention is made of the Russian Orthodox Church's traditionally positive attitude to wars fought for the "fatherland" nor is there an explicit reference to repentance, which is mentioned merely in connection with the ministry of peace of the Old Testament prophets (3.9.). However, the message states that the reality of a nuclear age has made the church change its former views (2.11).

In several places the message points to the connection between justice and peace in Christian terms (2.9, 3.30). When considering how peace is to come about, it refers not only to liturgy (3.20) and Christian education (3.21) but also to different political aspects, such as no first use of nuclear weapons, the moral reprehensibility of deterrence and the escalation of the arms race through the space-based defense initiative (SDI).

A joint statement under the title: "The Contribution of the Orthodox Church to the Realization of Peace, Justice, Freedom, Brotherliness and Love Amongst Nations as well as the Elimination of Racial and Other Forms of Discrimination" was issued at the Third Panorthodox Preconciliar Conference held on 28.10 - 6.11.1986 in Chambésy/Geneva.<sup>20</sup> Several vital concerns

of the Russian Orthodox Church are taken up here and unanimously endorsed by the other autocephalous orthodox churches with the integrity of God's creation being the central spiritual and ethical motive for the Christian responsibility for peace.

These examples, though chosen somewhat at random, are representative and suffice for the following chapter. They are meant to portray the diversity on the one hand, and on the other, the compatibility of the different peace statements of the churches, without passing any form of judgment whatsoever as regards their authors. Together they form a valuable stock of arguments and ethical points of view that need to be raised. In this I see the main aim of the consultation.

### III.

As the Methodist document, "In Defense of Creation," stipulates, there are in principle three main models for the Christian approach to the peace issue:

- the pacifist approach
- the just war doctrine
- the crusade mentality.

In their most extreme forms they exclude each other. However, an analysis of present-day debates shows that there are connecting lines.

The crusade idea appears to be farthest removed, and only with shame do we remember it as an aberration of the Middle Ages. However, even in this century, it still plays an important role - admittedly in a cultural Protestant secularized disguise. In his essay on the just war doctrine and the churches' responsibility for peace, H.E. Tödt quotes the German theologian Wilhelm Herrmann who in his *Ethics* (3rd edition 1904) considered war to be justified not only as a means of defense, but also as a means to spread the Christian European understanding of culture.<sup>21</sup>



In my opinion, George Weigel seems not far removed from this view when he says in *Peace and Freedom* <sup>22</sup> that it is not only the duty of the USA to defend "the American experience of democracy" but also "to advance its cause in the world" (p. 49). Therefore only a "changed Soviet Union [could] join us in pursuing alternatives to war" (p. 69). With this, the safeguard of peace is linked to ideological premises, an attitude which in turn merely endangers peace.

At the same time, Weigel criticizes what he considers to be a crusade mentality inherent in liberation theology (p. 38). In so doing he overlooks two vital differences between liberation theology and the crusade ideas: first of all, liberation theology is not about any specific political concept, but takes the side of the disenfranchised, the oppressed and impoverished; in brief, it stands for more justice, which, according to the biblical message, always goes hand in hand with peace (cf. Is. 32:17). And secondly, liberation theology does not side with the rulers but with those who are being ruled. The sweeping generalization according to which every type of liberation theology is said to be ultimately a Marxist theory of revolution is untenable. This is confirmed even by the "Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation" of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.<sup>23</sup>

It certainly does not seem in the least helpful to impute crusade plans to others. Wherever one has to do with firmly established hierarchies of values, there is the danger that, for the sake of supposedly inalienable values, war is assumed to be unavoidable. In view of the overkill capacities of the weapon arsenals of the world powers, this point of view may under certain circumstance be fatal. In this situation, the claim to life has to be the prime value, because without life all other values become futile. To put this into a theological context, what is at stake is the preservation of God's creation from total annihilation. In the nuclear age this is only possible if war, as an institution, is abolished once

and for all. For even if there were to be total nuclear disarmament, the knowledge of how to produce these weapons could no longer be forgotten. Only if war is overcome politically, could we perhaps truly exclude the possible use of nuclear weapons. Surely the protection of life by abolishing war is a common basis for an ecumenical peace ethic.

#### IV.

As early as 1948, at the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam, it was noted apodictically that "war is contrary to the will of God."<sup>24</sup> This unambiguous statement has not managed to prevent the some 140 wars that have been fought over the last 40 years, nor has it been able to slow down the arms race and thus to ward off the danger of a nuclear war. This, I believe, has to do with at least two problems. First of all, the statements of the World Council of Churches are not binding for the member churches. This is clearly indicated in the Toronto Statement.<sup>25</sup> Since the WCC cannot and does not want to be a church, it cannot speak to its members with the authority of a church. And secondly - and this follows from what was just said - both the addressees and the implications of the appeal remain unclear. With regard to the implications, several initiatives were taken at later Assemblies, but no consensus could be reached even there. As long as the world powers themselves, or the world at large, are regarded as being opposed to each other there has to be compromise and consideration of others. Here we must criticize Weizsäcker's call for a Peace Council, in as far as the churches are expected to speak a "word for peace that human-kind cannot ignore" (!).<sup>26</sup> The authority given to the church by God in Christ enables it primarily to speak to itself or its members.<sup>27</sup> It can only impose on itself and its members the consequences of the truth which the Holy Spirit makes visible. Even then it cannot make demands, because the willingness to suffer is not a requirement but a result of faith. The ethical assessment of war and injustice also needs to be grounded in the gospel message. Only the confident acceptance of the truth will make us willing to take up the task of discipleship.



Let us ask yet again whether the general consensus mentioned above - that the protection of life demands the abolition of war - is a requirement for an ecumenical peace ethic and its expansion. From a survey of several significant church statements published in recent years we can conclude that this is indeed required. Such a consensus can be justified both by means of a consistent just war doctrine and of a pacifism grounded in Christianity.

This does not exclude the fact that, in order to protect life, other measures besides the abolition of war are necessary. The World Council of Churches aims at a conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. In so doing, it in fact takes the bitter experience into account that even without nuclear war the economic and ecological foundations of the life of millions of people are being destroyed. However, even though these problems are very much interrelated, it is not possible to address them all at once. "Moreover", writes Wolfgang Lienemann,<sup>28</sup> "we cannot deny that although there seems to be a considerable consensus in the Christian churches as regards peace ethics, the same cannot be said of ethics in the areas of law and economics." This should not set our minds at rest but should show us once more that it is in the area of an ecumenical peace ethic that the common responsibility of the churches can find a common expression.

Pursuing this line of thought further, we must ask how the churches can speak about the abolition of war and what concrete steps would need to be taken. Let us imagine the following scenario:

1. First a word of peace from the churches would have to be an admission of their own culpability, not only for their past crusades. It would certainly befit today's Christians if they were to admit to their guilt in their participation in preparing and using military force, just as the German churches, in the so-called Stuttgart Confession (albeit only under ecumenical pressure), admitted to their totally inadequate resistance to injustice and

violence under the Nazi régime. Who if not the Christians could make such a liberating confession? This is much more in line with the Christian understanding of sin and forgiveness than the rather fatalistic acceptance of war and the fear of war as a consequence of the impenitent attitude of the sinner before God.<sup>29</sup>

2. A proper interpretation of the two-kingdom doctrine enables the church to remind governments of their duty to safeguard justice and peace (as defined by the Fifth Thesis of the Barmen Declaration). If it becomes obvious that the nation states are unable to do this, and if the international organizations also fail, then the church must remind its faithful that they ought to obey God rather than people (Acts 5:29). We will come back to this later. What is important is that the churches would not be interfering in the "secular realm" if they, aware of the human despair and the threat to humanity, come to the conclusion that the currently valid political concepts endanger rather than protect the survival of humanity. To become aware of this the church needs the expertise of all its members.

3. The rejection of political and military strategies that may result does not however do away with the conflicts to which it tries to react. If for example the concept of military (nuclear) deterrence appears no longer acceptable, peace will have to be ensured in another way. There are concepts that the church did not invent, but that are better suited to do justice to its concern to create and preserve peace in justice. At this point I would like to mention the concept of common security that first appeared in the report of the Palme Commission but was also dealt with at an LWF consultation which took place in October 1986 in Buckow (GDR).<sup>30</sup> In addition the EKD memorandum <sup>31</sup> proposes to change weapons "in the direction of a typically defensive concept of defense".<sup>32</sup> What both proposals have in common is that they do not flatly reject a legitimate interest in security and a genuine willingness to defend oneself. They do assume, however, that it is not only necessary but also possible to totally



abolish war in the future. At the same time they are also responding to the inevitable question which Yoder formulated as follows, "How can we defend ourselves if war can no longer do it?"<sup>33</sup>

4. Finally, with regard to the practical consequences of the church's rejection of war and nuclear armament we will have to revert once more to the question left unanswered in section 2. The peace documents of the various regional churches already quoted take this up in varying degrees of intensity. The fourth chapter of the US Roman Catholic bishops' peace document deals with this subject under the heading "The Pastoral Challenge and Response" and lists the following: 1. Educational Programs and Formation of Conscience, 2. True Peace Call for "Reverence of Life", 3. Prayer, 4. Penance.<sup>34</sup> Under the title, "The Church as Peacemaker," the US Methodist bishops also refer to Christian education. The Christian congregation and the Christian family are referred to as well as social spheres of action for the creation of peace. Here there is no explicit reference to penance. The EKD memorandum speaks of "possibilities for learning peace" (p. 66), but places them very generally in the social context. Here we see that this document does not explicitly address its own church community but the broad public. The necessity of repentance and conversion is not taken up again at this point. In general, the lack of individual ethical alternative courses of action is striking. The memorandum sticks to the formula of "service to peace with or without arms",<sup>35</sup> which in fact means: military and pacifist measures taken to ensure peace are ethically of the same value, since both can be said to be in keeping with a commitment to peace grounded in Christianity. In contrast to this, W. Krusche (former GDR bishop) established the following thesis at a Christian peace conference held in Kiel in 1984. "It is not those who reject military service, but those who are still prepared to do it [today - GPF] who must explicitly justify their decision for reasons of conscience."<sup>35</sup> This thesis takes up a rather touchy subject, discussed especially amongst

the Protestant churches in East and West. The conference of the Protestant church leaders in the GDR could not side with W. Krusche. They continue to maintain that a variety of personal decisions of choice are (still?) ethically arguable.

It is striking that in the statement of the American churches the at times quite far reaching decisions on the politics and ethics of peace simply bypass this subject. And yet, it is an issue that does not concern only soldiers and conscientious objectors but also scientists in the arms industry, civil servants in the ministries, in brief, everyone who is somehow involved in the military industrial complex. Can they all carry on as before regardless of the peace statement of their churches? Casuistry with regard to peace ethics is to be eschewed just as much as indifference. Hans-Richard Reuter points out<sup>36</sup> that "agreement and disagreement concerning the churches' statements on peace ethics" go beyond confessional boundaries, but "they continue all the more clearly to be explained by the geopolitical, social and constitutional contexts from which they come." He concludes that "contextuality is and will continue to be a crucial element in the ethical debate on measures to prevent war in a nuclear age." Pastors can only decide what Christians should be asked to do or not to do in certain circumstances on the basis of the concrete context of life. When it comes to the church's counseling of individual consciences this makes the ecumenical conciliar exchange all the more important. This is how alternative courses of action for churches, congregations, and individual Christians can become complementary and thus more effective than uniform instructions could ever be.

## V.

Let us sum up these considerations in view of the conciliar process regarding the peace issue and the contribution of the LWF to it:

1. That war is not to be is God's divine will. This is a general Christian concept. Yet has the time not come "when the political



institution of war must be and can be overcome"?<sup>37</sup> Weizsäcker has a rational argument for his thesis. In brief: the development of nuclear weapons leaves us no other choice if humanity is to survive.

Especially in Lutheran circles, hamatology (the doctrine of sin) is sometimes cited as an argument against the possible overcoming of war as an institution to settle conflicts.<sup>38</sup> It can be argued, however, that it is precisely the simul justus et peccator that distinguishes the Lutheran doctrine of justification. The experience of the sinner being justified has ethical implications in so far as it is no longer sin which alone dominates the human being. It is therefore not an expression of Christian realism to leave out the coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ when addressing the political ethics of the Christian. Seen from this perspective the Sermon on the Mount is of an "anticipatory ethical" nature.<sup>39</sup> To quote W. Krusche once again, "of course the church will have to make plausible what it means in political terms, but in so doing it should not be swayed by what has been seen as possible and realistic up to now; rather, it will need to decipher those possibilities accorded by God that will make sense also to political reason, provided that it lets itself be liberated from its previous fixation".<sup>40</sup>

2. Theologically this thesis may be supported by the just war doctrine as well as by Christian pacifism. I find it unclear, if not controversial, whether the respective lines of reasoning refer only to nuclear arms and their possible utilization or also to the overcoming of war as such. If I plead for the latter, there is only one reason: the knowledge of how to produce and deploy nuclear arms implies the possibility that every war will become a nuclear war, even if the existing nuclear weapons were indeed totally eradicated (zero option). If nuclear war is to be banished, war needs to be abolished altogether.

3. On the part of the churches a credible witness for peace needs to be ecumenical. Weizsäcker says that "a theology of peace which is to become effective in the church and the whole world presupposes that theologians look for peace amongst them-

selves".<sup>41</sup> This does not mean that the churches should first do away with all diverging theological opinions, for the "churches' teachings are means of communication in faith but not its criteria."<sup>42</sup> Ultimately all theological designs were answers in faith to the historical period in which they came about.<sup>43</sup> An ecumenical peace ethic based on a theological foundation could be Christianity's answer to the present situation. It has to be ecumenical, because humanity can see itself represented only by the unity of the church.<sup>44</sup>

4. A Christian peace ethic in ecumenical unity has to be politically viable. That is to say, it must not be limited to abstract demands and theological considerations. A Christian ethics must include guidelines for flexible politics fantasy, and should not be content with either obedience to the authorities or resistance to the status quo. This includes the need to reflect theologically upon political aims and strategies, and possibly to ensure their implementation. Partial steps towards change in political thinking could also be helpful as shown in the example of defensive armament. The concept of common security does provide us with a model of political philosophy that can be theologically decoded<sup>45</sup> and be made theologically applicable.<sup>46</sup>

5. Since every theological decision implies ethical consequences, the question of how individual Christians, congregations and churches are to respond to concrete challenges must not be left out of our considerations. To make sense, this must not happen in a sort of timeless casuistry but by taking into account the contextuality of the Christian witness to peace. It is not only the different situations of Christians living in diverse social systems that play a role here. Special attention must be paid to the frightening gap between rich and poor which makes the demand for justice crucial in the Christian witness for peace. For the churches in the poorer parts of the world, access to the peace issue is possible only on the basis of the demand for greater justice and therefore the peace ethics of contextual theology will need to be examined particularly from this point of view.



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- 17 Cf. Hans-Richard Reuter, *Konfession und Ethik in der Friedensverantwortung der Kirchen: Eine vergleichende Studie*, Texte und Materialien der FEST, Reihe B, No. 7, Heidelberg, 1986
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- 19 Message of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church on *War and Peace in a Nuclear Age*, unpublished translation
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- 21 Heinz Eduard Tödt, "Die Lehre vom gerechten Krieg und der Friedensauftrag der Kirchen", in *ZEE*, Vol. 14 (1970), pp. 159f.
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- 26 Cf. C.F. v. Weizsäcker, note 2, p. 11
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- 28 Wolfgang Lienemann, "Chancen eines Friedenskonzils - Notwendigkeit einer ökumenischen Friedenskirchenversammlung", in Hans-Richard Reuter (ed.), *Konzil des Friedens: Beiträge zur ökumenischen Diskussion I*, Heidelberg: FEST, 1987, p. 52
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# JUST PEACE - JUST WAR

## A COMMENT

*Trond Bakkevig*

When in 1986 the LWF Executive Committee decided to send a letter to member churches on the "Call for an Ecumenical Global Convocation on Peace," it said amongst other things that "the doctrine of 'Just War' should be replaced by a doctrine of 'Just Peace,' which aims at declaring the production threat and use of nuclear weapons to be a violation of the purposes of God our Creator, Giver and Redeemer of Life." I was among the skeptics. I still maintain this skepticism and will give the reasons in the following.

Around 1970 there was a discussion about peace as a "positive" or a "negative" concept. The argument was that peace defined as absence of war leads to the satisfaction with the present state of affairs, which included a seeming stalemate in East/West relations with a growing nuclear arsenal on both sides, and a North/South relationship which onesidedly was in favor of the rich part of the world. A "positive" concept of peace would, it was argued, unmask this situation and function as an impetus to the work for moving the world out of its present stalemate.

The problem with this so-called positive concept of peace was, however, that it drained the term "peace" of the only verifiable content it had, namely, the absence of war. By doing this, it opened the way for an ideologization of the concept of peace. What is "positive"? Some would relate this to a specific economic system. Some would say it is a situation with democracy and respect for human rights. But then: What kind of economic



system, what kind of democracy (multi-party, one party?), which human rights (stress on economic and social or civil and political)?

On top of all this came the whole discussion of "structural violence," because "positive peace" was at least seen to mean the absence of "structural violence." Legitimate as this last concept is - and to a large extent I believe it is - it makes it more difficult to give a precise meaning to the concept of a peace. The reason for this is that the use of the term "structural violence" raises the whole issue of legitimate and illegitimate use of power (not violence). And power is a prerequisite for establishing any kind of political order, even a just or a peaceful one.

In other words, the concept "positive peace" raised more problems than it supposedly should solve.

I am afraid that we will soon be faced with many of the same problems when the issue today is that the doctrine of "Just War" should be replaced by a doctrine of "Just Peace". What is a teaching of "just peace"? A doctrine would have to give some content to the concept. This will immediately raise the whole issue of what "just" means in connection with "peace". Again one would have the same problem as with the "positive concept of peace". Then what is "just"? It has to do with distribution of resources, establishing community amongst people instead of conflict, etc. All of this is good and in accordance with any valid Christian ethic. The problem, however, is that the term "peace" is defined by other concepts, all of which makes it open to differing interpretations and consequently to ideologization or to putting into it all the dreams we have for a better world. None of this needs to be wrong. The problem is what it does to the concept of peace.

We need a concept which can describe the situation where there is the absence of war and absence of the use of violence. This situation is a precondition for the formation of a political order which facilitates justice and respect for human rights.

Peace as the absence of war, or the use of arms, is a situation which is both ethically desirable and politically necessary. We should therefore use the term peace in such a way that we do not blur this.

The ethically correct desire for the absence of war is, however, not a value which excludes the use of arms under all circumstances. People who have fought foreign occupation and wars of liberation can subscribe to this. I therefore find Götz Planer-Friedrich's statement too sweeping, when he says that "It would certainly befit today's Christians if they were to admit to their guilt in their participation in preparing and using military force ... (see above, p. 19). Is this something which could be said to the people in for example Angola and Mozambique or those who participated in the struggle against Somoza in Nicaragua? I do not think so.

There is a need for a doctrine which tries to define the legitimate and illegitimate use of violence and military power. This is what the traditional teaching on just war tried to do. Instead of flatly rejecting this doctrine we should try to re-interpret it in such a way that it can be used as sound theological teaching, relevant to today's problems.

Lack of justice can give ground for the legitimate use of arms. A call for peace under such circumstances will often function as a call for the preservation of injustice. Justice and injustice are issues which need to be taken into account when the question of the legitimate or illegitimate use of violence is discussed. A doctrine of just war must therefore also deal with these issues. If we do away with this teaching and solely concentrate on a doctrine on just peace, we may, however, end up with no answers when faced with the problem of how we do away with injustice.

The concept "just peace" is, however, well equipped for dealing with eschatological realities. It can give direction to our dreams and hopes. As such it can also be an inspiration to the actions which are needed in the struggle for justice and peace in this world.



# PEACE THROUGH JUSTICE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

*Alex Bhiman*

## Introduction

Theological engagement within the context of oppression and the struggle for liberation begins with suspicion. Fundamental to our hermeneutical point of departure is the interrogation of concepts. Hence the questions: Why "just peace"? What is the rationale of "just peace"? Is it an "adjusted alternative to justice"? Therefore we affirm what is now normative for the struggling Black community - there can be no peace without justice. It is negative to predicate about peace before justice.

The only possible premise which may allow the notion of a just peace is that peace, like many of the essentials of Christian faith, has in the South African situation acquired ambiguity. What we have is a false unjustifiable peace. The *conditio sine qua non* even in this light is that peace in the South African context implies a political and socio-economic reality issuing from justice. The present political and socio-economic structures can only generate a false peace.

It must be noted that it is only in this context of ambiguity that the notion of a just peace may receive attention. If however it is meant to bear negatively on the struggle for justice, both within and outside South Africa, then it is totally bankrupt and a non-starter.

What follows therefore is an exposition of the South African context, its theological implications for peace and finally theological criteria for peace in that context.



## **I. The South African context under apartheid**

Apartheid in its modern form is the scientific application of race separation, used to maintain a political and economic system of disparity, and is enforced by a government without legitimacy, benefiting a White minority over a Black majority. In this sense apartheid has become a bastion against peace, a perpetual source of inequalities as well as a practice maintained by military aggression.

### **1. Apartheid - the bastion against justice**

Apartheid evidently is more than a doctrine. It is the practice of injustice. Politically it results in power concentrated in the hands of a White minority. The present "Tricameral Parliament" is a mere example of how apartheid multiplies structures in order to maintain itself. Economically, apartheid has exploited the country's resources in the interests of the White minority. Within the apartheid economy it has been strategic for 13 percent of the land to be allocated to Blacks who form 80 percent of the population whilst 87 percent is being controlled by Whites (20 percent of the population).

Apartheid is entrenched in society by many laws and policies; the resistance of a majority who cannot bless apartheid has however necessitated the present State of Emergency in South Africa. This alone provides the reprieve the government needs for consolidating its structures and programs. In fact the State of Emergency has become a permanent feature of life in South Africa now that it has been extended and is completing its second year. Repression, co-option, internal and external destabilization prevail. The endpoint or high point of the political and economic expansion of apartheid has been reached.

The State of Emergency is rendered effective by the introduction of restrictions. However, since the liberal press reports always have a bias in favor of the status quo, these restrictions are meant to clamp down heavily on the alternative media. But to ensure that people do not become aware of what is really happen-

ing, journalists have been banned or detained and papers of the alternative media are threatened with government censorship or suspension. It is intended then that people should not feel the strength of the struggle and that by stopping the flow of information to the outside the disinvestment pressure would lessen.

In this situation justice requires the total eradication of apartheid. The "principalities and powers" of this system against justice must be eliminated. This is a political task with the theological imperative to fight against such "principalities and powers" and to empower those in the quest for their God-given humanity and right to life.

## **2. Apartheid - economic disparity beginning with the theft of land**

The issue of land which singularly encapsulates apartheid is central to any understanding of the apartheid context in South Africa. The land question takes the issue of apartheid back to 1652 when Europeans began persecuting the indigenous Khoi people.<sup>1</sup> This continued until 1913 when by the Native Land Act every Black person was dispossessed of his/her land. Blacks have since become reduced to servants, tenants, farmhands - a floating source of cheap labor to be used at will. Here are the roots of the migratory labor system, the pass laws, influx control, and other acts to keep Blacks out of urban areas such as the Group Areas Act and the Squatting and Urban Areas Act. Today the Homelands Act makes Blacks foreigners in the land of their birth. Poverty, unemployment, malnutrition and authoritarian leadership mark the quality of life in the homelands.

The theft of land marks the beginning of and underlies the political economy based on apartheid. Blacks must be restricted from the access to land in order to provide a cheap and exploitable labor force within the political economy. Apartheid political economy would not allow for democratization, access to capital and labor, and the opening up of society. These must be denied so that apartheid may continue as the order, and justice remain a dream.



Perhaps it should be noted that apartheid's political economy is granted its lease on life by the complicity of the West, which has failed to impose sanctions or to make effective the partial sanctions; instead new loans still come into South Africa.

Seen from a theological point of view this economy which has resulted in the theft of land in South Africa is a deterrent against the function of land as affirmed in the confession of the Old Testament people (cf. Dt. 26:5-9) where land is a link to identity, an awareness of the person as an individual and within the community. How can this ever be possible under an apartheid-styled economy?

### 3. Apartheid: The basis of inequalities

For Blacks the quality of life under apartheid is marked by high rents, poor services, high unemployment, and poor facilities. The removal or uprooting of communities has by now affected 6 million people.

Inferior education still persists despite "Soweto June 1976", a powerful education protest, in which security forces killed a number of children. The recent clamp-down on universities to toe the government line demonstrates that education in South Africa at any level must serve, and not conflict, with the interests of apartheid.

On the factory floor apartheid capitalism renders workers victims of exploitation. Independent trade unions force the possibility of streamlining action by the government. Legislation, making it possible for trade unions to be charged for losses or damages incurred during strikes as well as limiting the number of strikes to no more than one per year, is to be introduced. In recent mine strikes, mine police and private armies were used to put down the strike at the cost of several lives.

In all areas of life, be it education, work, or housing, apartheid benefits Whites only.



In total, the above illustrates the only direction in the quality of life under apartheid. For Blacks this is the denial of life. The fullness of life that derives from God is put to death as is evident in the education, working and living conditions of Blacks. The crisis in these areas has presented a crisis of faith (cf. the Evangelical Witness and the Kairos Document).

#### 4. Apartheid's military aggression of Southern Africa

South Africa has crossed the line from a police state to a military state. This is not only evident from the military personnel that mark the cabinet and its committees, but also from the fact that at present there is a war on against the citizens of South Africa and Namibia as well as the military aggression against the Southern African states.

Since the 1976 revolt and more heavily since the 1984 eruptions against the new constitution soldiers have been deployed in the townships. The townships have become "killing fields". But both in the townships and more so in the Bantustans, apartheid has raised up vigilantes and warlords.<sup>2</sup> These vigilantes and warlords are used to put down the struggle for justice and to eliminate those in it. Like the South African Defense Force and the police they intimidate popular organizations, students, housing and rent action groups as well as countering progressive Black trade union efforts by systematic strike breaking and the killing of union members. This is not "Black on Black" violence, it is apartheid's war on people.

A military style system is on the verge of coming into effect in order to maintain apartheid at all levels. It is called the National Management Security System which through about 1500 committees is geared to put into effect the Botha-Malan Total Strategy (i.e., deploying all economic, political, psycho-social, and military resources towards state security) so that the total onslaught, as it is called (i.e., the resistance of the popular organizations for radical change) may be countered. At all levels, be it cabinet, regional, municipal, metropolitan, the chief feature is the key role played by military personnel. Beyond the borders of

South Africa, the military has occupied Namibia in the name of guarding Namibia's freedom and protecting law and order. This conflict has escalated to a costly war. Because of conscription young countrymen are forced to fight their own countrymen. In Namibia, violence, murder, rape, and looting are the order of the day. Security Police and Koevoet, a paramilitary unit programmed to kill, violate human rights in Namibia. Namibia has been turned into a military camp. Beside the billion rand cost of the war, thousands have already died and been maimed and almost 70,000 are now refugees. In Namibia life is a matter of wishful survival.

The apartheid regime also seeks to make a military camp of the whole region of Southern Africa. It follows a policy of destabilization which would turn the subcontinent into a "subcontinent of refugees" where none is at home. It is clear that the submission of the frontline states to South Africa as a regional power is what is being enforced by military aggression as a basis for peace in Southern Africa. It is estimated that so far destabilization has cost 900,000 lives.

#### 5. Apartheid resisted by a struggle for liberation

The struggle for justice erodes the ground beneath the apartheid structures by a process of delegitimation. Hence it is the gains of the struggle for liberation that are signified in the militarization of South African society.

For many years now, even before the manifestation of apartheid as an official policy in 1948, the struggling peoples of South Africa and Namibia saw their liberation as beginning by overthrowing apartheid. Through nonviolent means, a struggle for a just order had been in process, until the space for nonviolent action reached the zero point and there remained no other resource but that of an armed struggle. The liberation movements of the people had been banned. Both in the struggle waged from within the country and from without, the street committees and the liberation movements, the guiding vision is one of justice in South Africa. Blood has flowed from children, women, youth and



men in the rise of people power which wants to render apartheid and the illegitimate regime baseless. Despite the attempts of the illegitimate state in South Africa to crush the people's resistance by repressive actions of detentions, treason trials, state of emergency, and killings, the people caught in the marching tide of the struggle for freedom and justice hold high the flag of resistance. It is in the Kairos movement in South Africa that this struggle must be seen for its theological significance and demands in doing theology.

## **II. Theological implications of the context**

Both apartheid as a bastion for injustice, a violent oppressive power, a perpetual source of inequalities and the theft of land have ensured that the dominant oppressive side and the dominant group provide the perspective for our context. The dominant group alone was eligible to be heard and seen. In this context, in which theological engagement and the church are equal accomplices, the theological action of seeing the oppressed in their struggle for justice becomes the starting point for any attempt at peace and therefore a theology of peace. This is the point at which God started and the point from which any theological sense of his will must be made (cf. Ex. 3:7-9). God saw the treatment of his people in Egypt. This is the point at which Jesus the Messiah began appropriating his mission beginning with the announcement of the kingdom of God. Jesus saw the harassed and oppressed and had compassion on them (Mt.9:36). This theological starting point supports the thesis that the key to global peace is the Two Thirds World's struggle for justice. This is the point of entry for any quest for peace or any theology of peace. Such a starting point saves any theology of peace from falling prey to serving the interest of those that have propped up apartheid to what it is today. In terms of the Kairos Document, if a theology of peace is again a construction to reduce "the poor to passivity, obedience and apathy"<sup>3</sup>, then it is heretical.

In order to see this theology in its greater depth two things become necessary. Firstly the despised and unknown symbols the oppressed have raised, and hold dearly to, must be theologically



appropriated. The minimum demands of the oppressed for what they would see as the beginning of a just order in South Africa are enshrined in a document called the Freedom Charter which since 1955 has become the manifesto of the African National Congress. Secondly and as a "complementary starting point" for a theology of peace in South Africa is the theological appropriation of the South African government as being tyrannical, illegitimate and incapable by virtue of its apartheid nature of being an instrument of peace. This other focus will consequently ensure the elimination of the "principalities and powers" of evil responsible for the chaos that parades as "peace" as well as the enemy images constructed of communism and the armed struggle as being contra the "Christian peace" of apartheid.<sup>4</sup>

The Kairos Document has begun to proceed in terms of a theology that seeks peace in the direction proposed above. It cites that God not only saw but also took part in the struggle of the oppressed in history.<sup>5</sup> In Jesus Messiah, God expresses his commitment by continuing this solidarity as Emmanuel "God with us". The Bible in the view of the Kairos Document is about the solidarity of God with the oppressed, their oppression by the power of their day, and their liberation struggle.<sup>6</sup> The point of entry for a theology of peace is through the struggle for justice in South Africa.

In terms of the "complementary starting point", the Kairos Document indicates the significance of time for "special campaigns", "programs", "projects" that are forged around the political aspiration for liberation.<sup>7</sup> It can therefore be seen how significant these are for the concrete reality of a theology for peace. Acts of civil disobedience too are of similar significance because they acquire legitimacy in view of the illegitimate and tyrannical character of the present regime.

The need for an empowering theology is pressing. A theology that can produce aggressive action for justice and peace. A theology of peace would assume this character if the theological key were the demand of the liberation struggle for the claims of creation. This is proposed on the basis of the hermeneutical

assumption that can be made from the relationship seen between the liberation narratives in Exodus and the creation story in Genesis (granted that the dominant ideological text has suppressed the oppressed version of these stories).<sup>8</sup> This hermeneutical assumption holds that the creation story was necessitated by the liberation struggle of the people of God in the Old Testament, circulating orally before being committed to the written text.

Consequently it can be understood how this relationship of liberation and creation generates the impulse within the struggle for justice in South Africa. In this relationship, creation does not only function to emphasize humankind as being in the *imago Dei* and therefore having value, worth and dignity, but also of humanity as being endowed with God-given resources for the preservation and fulfillment of creation. To remain at the former level of understanding leads to a static appreciation of humankind as being created in *imago Dei*. The latter however preserves the dynamism of "*imago Dei*". The Black people's deprivation of land in South Africa is one way by which their *imago Dei* standing (as endowed with resources for creation) has been arrested. In fact, ecology is also used to frustrate the life of Black people.

#### Theological parameters for a theology of peace

For us the Kairos Document, the Lusaka Statement<sup>9</sup> and the Theology and Violence Document<sup>10</sup> fix the parameters of a theology of peace in South Africa. These documents take into consideration the ambiguity of our context generated by two established opposed realities: that of the oppressors, a minority, determined to uphold their privileges by military means, and that of the oppressed, a majority determined to obtain liberation and justice. What are these theological parameters?

a) No theology of peace should succumb to the dichotomy of the spiritual as opposed to the socio-political. The struggle in South Africa is a struggle for political rights and the dominant theological approach has tended to privatize and individualize spiritual in-



dulgence<sup>11</sup> thus isolating every implication of context for faith. Peace will prevail in South Africa once a just socio-political and economic reality has been established.

b) A theology of peace cannot discount political responses as lying or coming from outside the horizons of its impulse. The background of the African National Congress is rooted in the commitment of steadfast Christians such as Chief Albert Luthuli. The Kairos Document makes clear that the church has failed to understand politics and political strategies and has therefore failed to identify their theological implications. Theology was opposed to politics, and anything to do with the oppression of Black people was politics. Hence the distance, and the belief and practice that a Christian solution needs necessarily to be different from a political one.<sup>12</sup> In line with this is the task of destroying enemy images such as those constructed of communism. Today we have the sad reality that those who actively carry out the gospel mandate must operate outside the church. In the South African context, a theology of peace must not be neutral or neutralizing, nor must it sublimate the priority of justice.

c) The theology of peace must reject any grounding in the notion of reconciliation of the two sides in their inequality.<sup>13</sup> Nor does peace depend on a change of heart. Peace has to do with confronting structures of oppression and dismantling them. This is not a "peaceful" task. Peace demands repentance and restitution before reconciliation can effect peace. There can be no peace without justice.

d) The South African context requires that any conceptualization of justice take cognizance of the fact that the South African regime is illegitimate and therefore can never act in the interests of peace for all but only peace for some. The Kairos Document has exposed the sham of the justice of "reforms". Justice has to come from below.<sup>14</sup>

e) The Kairos Document has exposed the nature of violence in South Africa and has challenged the church to recognize its si-



lence at the violence of apartheid. What theology or lack of theology has been responsible for this? The Lusaka Statement expresses the position of the church that the liberation movements have been compelled to take up arms.<sup>15</sup> The Theology and Violence Document goes further and points out that non-violence is often used to mean reform or passivity, but that it can also mean active resistance to oppression. There is no exclusive choice between armed struggle and non-violence; the two complement each other.<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

In South Africa peace is an ambiguous word because it has been stolen by the powerful dominant class. It is used to shroud the forms of justice envisaged in the struggle of the oppressed Black masses. The writer embraces the hope that through their struggles for justice, the people of the Two-Thirds World will emerge to play a messianic role in contributing to world peace as mediators in the East-West conflict. But they must be dignified and worthy mediators, no more an exploited people. In South Africa this means freedom from White domination and apartheid and the realization of the dream and hope of all Black people in South Africa.

## NOTES

- 1 *Racism and Apartheid in Southern Africa*, UNESCO, Paris, 1974, p. 16
- 2 F. Haysom, "Vigilantes-Mabangakila", WITS University, JHB, 1986, provides a comprehensive treatment of this subject
- 3 *The Kairos Document*, ICT, Braamfontein, 1986, Catholic Institute for International Relations, Third World Theology series, p. 3
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 7
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 28
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 25
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 29
- 8 I.J. Mesala, "Use of the Bible in Black Theology", Conference Paper of the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT), 1984. Mesala here makes the methodological point that texts of the Bible arise out of the struggle and therefore encode a reference to the "interests and agendas of which they are products"
- 9 *The Lusaka Statement* is the final declaration of an ecumenical gathering of churches under the theme "The Churches' Search for Justice and Peace in Southern Africa" held in Lusaka, Zambia, 4-8 May 1987, under the aegis of the Program to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches. The churches acknowledged that the liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia had been "compelled" to the use of arms and pledged support for the armed struggle
- 10 *The Document on Theology and Violence* represents the result of a working conference of 125 persons convened by the South African Council of Churches, the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Institute of Contextual Theology in South Africa held at the University of Cape



Town, 17-25 November 1987. Following the exposition of the nature of violence in South Africa in the Kairos Document, the ICT took up the debate on violence in South Africa, and the document is an attempt to document the deate and to move beyond

11 *Kairos Document*, see note 3 above, p. 16

12 *Ibid.*, p. 15

13 *Ibid.*, p. 9

14 *Ibid.*, p. 11

15 See note 9

16 See note 10

# WAYS OF JUSTICE IN A JOURNEY TO PEACE

Vitor Westhelle

## I.

*Life is better than death, I believe, if only because it is less boring, and because it has fresh peaches in it. In any case, earth is my home.... So let me tell you: I intend to protect my home. Praying, not a curse, only the hope that my courage will not fail my love. But if by some miracle, and all our struggle, the earth is spared, only justice to every living thing (and everything is alive) will save humanity. And we are not saved yet. Only justice can stop a curse.*

These are the words Alice Walker wrote in 1982 commenting on the world situation. They ring deeply true for all of us in Latin America who live as homeless in the land that is ours. To curse is an old prophetic genre which has been almost lost in Christian circles. To curse is frequently the last resort that people living in displacement have in order to retain some control - some linguistic control over a situation that is out of their control. To curse is to subvert an imposed cultural system with its own elements. There is a beautiful passage in Shakespeare's "The Tempest" that sets an interplay between Prospero, the conqueror of the Caribbean, and Caliban the native. Prospero needs Caliban to do the house work, to fetch the wood and to make the fire.

In Tempest I, ii, 363 Caliban says: - You taught me language; and my profit on't/Is, I know how to curse; the red plague rid you,/For learning me your language!

The problem with a curse is that the powers it unleashes are beyond any control. The result of a curse is not selective. When a prophet curses, all is at stake. And this is a problem! Take, for example, 2 Maccabees which is a reflection on the experience of



a people who are suffering for the evil done by those who were supposed to lead them. They brought a curse upon themselves which would affect the life of just and unjust people alike. The question is how to overcome a curse. I believe, that we find that the suggestions come from those who most suffer in displacement. First of all it entails a renewed confidence in a God whose power overcomes death itself and is manifested in the despised and dispossessed; and secondly it calls for a commitment to bring about justice.

So a curse hangs over our heads - be it famine and malnutrition or the nuclear holocaust. But I do not want to pray a prayer of doom and to announce an unavoidable end. Let us all take another route. Let us look at life from the perspective of those who most suffer the menacing powers of death and in whom hope is alive because nothing is reliable, in whom faith is strength for the rest is powerlessness, and where love brings together those who cannot survive apart. This perspective sets an agenda in which the priorities need to be defined. And these priorities will tell us that, for example, it might be relevant to ask why there is anything instead of nothing (Heidegger). But this is not as important as to ask with the Two-Thirds World, why there is nothing but bread on the table?

Life in the cellars of humanity offers a very dim perspective on these amazingly important, relevant and broad issues such as peace and justice.

From the underside of history, perspectives for the solution of worldwide problems are severely limited. From the cellars of humanity the perspective that we have is conditioned by the small openings that allow for no more than a limited focus. There are issues that might be quite important in the long term, but when the limits of life are so close that any relaxed moment can bring death closer, then we cannot afford to ask after them. In a poem by César Vallejo the pertinent question is asked:

*A man searches for bones and scraps on the dump site,  
How can I write about the infinite?*

Paraphrasing: More than half of the Brazilian population receives up to 40 U.S. dollars a month. Should I justify a deontological principle or defend a utilitarian argument? What threatens life is so near that great theoretical detours from the immediacy of life might be sufficient to miss it altogether.

Our frame of reference has more to do with the experience of space than time. We do not think of a light at the end of the tunnel. There is no God Chronos in our mythologies. The future is not as relevant a category as that which lies on the other side of a fence or a wall. Time is really a function of space, and the history of geopolitics. In fact, if we talk about time we must first ask what time we are actually referring to. We not only have 4000 years of civilizatory history in the world as a contemporary reality within the continent, or even within one single country in Latin America, but we also have different meanings of time for these different contexts which are also relative to these contexts.

Highly sophisticated theoretical endeavors might be very relevant to finding a solution to our problems but one needs time to accomplish such a theoretical task. Time is always a problem for people who do not have much space to develop the possibilities that life offers. On the social level, we in Latin America experience a clear consciousness of the relativity of time and space.

Let me use an analogy from the theory of relativity to illustrate the point I want to make. Let us consider a cosmic traveler who at the speed of light heads for the nearest star to find a solution to a problem affecting the present generation on earth. Further, let us suppose that this trip would allow for a solution to be found. Traveling at the speed of light would represent ten years in the life of this cosmonaut. Twenty years to go and return to earth. But according to the theory of relativity, these 20 years would represent 200 years on earth. The cosmonaut would return to earth only 20 years older, but her or his generation would have disappeared long ago.

It is in this sense that encompassing theoretical solutions like a new economic order, the search for worldwide peace, and so



forth, seem to imply a journey to places too distant for the solution to be still relevant to the people whose lives are immediately threatened. The solutions we must find have to be relative to the time and space in which the problem emerges and develops. This is not to say that great solutions are unimportant, they may be highly relevant, but they might also come too late. Obviously we can also not avoid the suspicion that there might be a hidden agenda behind these well meaning and great humanitarian efforts which do not lead to any change.

Behind the emphasis that Latin American theology places on practice is the conviction that we cannot afford more than small and very limited answers to the immediate problems affecting those living in the cellars of humanity. There is no hatred of theory but the solutions must be adjusted to the social time and space we live in.

The very word "theory" has an interesting etymology. In ancient Greece, *theoros* was the name given to the official delegate who was dispatched from a city-state to consult the gods and receive an oracle about some problem of city policy. By extension the word was used to designate the official representatives of governments at great public events, like the Olympic games. Finally the word came to mean uncommitted observation or contemplation.

This etymology is rather interesting because although the concept has been secularized, theoretical journeys have remained the way to observe and contemplate things how they are in order to establish how they ought to be. The reservations we have with respect to theoretical "journeys" in Latin America is related to this suspicion that no matter how relevant they might be, they might also come too late.

It is also interesting to note that the word "theory" and its cognates are used in the New Testament with a different reference. It does not designate the detachment of a person from the immediate experience of life, a long journey to higher realms, but it describes the attitude of beholding the revelation of God as the incarnate being, sub contrario. For example, the women are the

theoroi of the crucified (Mk. 15:40; Mt. 27:55). Jesus is the one who establishes the object of a theoretical attitude: "he who sees me sees him who sent me" (Jn. 12:45). Or we could also say: "She who looks at me is also a theoretician of the One who sent me."

In the Christian tradition a theoretical attitude is primarily a function of doxology. It is the capability of seeing the glory of God in what does not seem to be glorious (Jn. 17:24). This is a testimony to the unrestrained gift of life that emerges even from death (Jn. 6:62). The object of theoretical observation is the revelation of God's glory amongst those of low status and the discernment of the conflict of life and death in situations where evil manifests itself (Mk. 5:38).

I regard this as an important shift in perspective from the classical use of the concept. A theoretical attitude is not one of cool, contemplative detachment, but one of immersion, of being "baptized" into the death of Jesus, as Paul would say (Rom. 6:3). And this death is none other than the symbol for the places of death in which the displaced and the dispossessed are. Theory is the discernment of God's *doxa* in Christ within the experience conditioned by ungodliness.

When Gustavo Gutiérrez said that "to do justice is to know God" he was also suggesting that the doing of justice presupposes the discernment of God's presence amongst those who most suffer the menacing powers of death. This knowledge of God implies being in solidarity with those in whom God's justification is vigorously experienced for they are those who neither have the space nor the environment to be godly. This is paradoxical, but it is also the starting point for our reflections on justice and peace. I am suggesting that peace and justice are most present there where one least expects to find them. In this context it is certainly true that an act of faith is necessary to gain understanding.

No romanticism is allowed. There is no free space one can run to. No option to enter or not to enter the gates of hell - much



less of getting out of it. The point is to change the situations of death by conquering them. This sense of the inescapable is pervasive in our cultural contexts. João Guimarães Rosa in his remarkable novel, *Grandes Sertões: Veredas* - where the reality of peasants living in the backlands of Brazil is framed in an allegorical struggle between God and the devil - , expresses this in the words of the main character: "We must get out of the backlands! But one can only get out of the backlands by conquering them inside...." This is not fatalism but the sober realism animated by the hope that our faith will not fail our love.

## II.

A brief description of our situation will help to better establish the contours of these backlands so as to explore ways of justice in a journey to peace.

Latin America is a dependent continent. The roots of this dependence go back to the Spanish and Portuguese colonization which began in the sixteenth century. Crowned by the slavery of first the native inhabitants and then of Africans, the veins of the continent were cut open and minerals, gold, copper, sugar, coffee and wood poured into Europe. Unlike the pioneers in North America the colonizer came to prosper in and from and not for the countries of Latin America. This situation would change only with the success of the struggles for political independence fought throughout the nineteenth century against decadent empires. From the simple form of plain political and economic dependence, there was a shift in the form of dependence that was from then on characterized primarily by economic and technological factors.

By this time England had just spread its tentacles over the continent. In exchange for manufactured goods demanded by an indigenous elite in countries where the economy had been restricted to extraction and agriculture, the control over the price of goods for export destined to raise revenues was progressively lost so that always more was sold than received in return.

In this situation Latin America reached the Great Depression that affected the world market and in particular the capitalist economies of the dominant nations. The export revenues of Latin American countries dropped drastically. The awareness of the vulnerability of the economic model adopted and the practical consequences of the lack of financial resources for the importation of industrial goods forced the Latin American nations to a major shift in the direction of development. From the perspective that development would come by orienting the national economies of the continent to the export of food and minerals, a new direction was given from the 1930s on. It was called "inward directed development". Industries for the production and manufacture of industrial goods were created or improved relieving the market of the increasing cost of imports although this market is still restricted to the national oligarchies and to a small but emerging middle class.

Yet, dependence had roots still uncovered. The character of dependence became more and more defined by the emerging industries. But, in spite of all, the economies were flourishing creating a development of unprecedented importance in the history of the continent. Obviously this was possible due to the low wages of the working class which was excluded from the selective market of the manufactured goods it produced. The export of food and raw materials continued and brought substantial profit in the period following World War II. This was subsequently invested in national industries throughout the 1950s.

In spite of the economic deprivation of the working class due to low wages and endemic unemployment, Latin Americans were reminded by Walt Rostow, for example, that such was the condition of the working class in England during the Industrial Revolution. The recipe prescribed was to wait for the economic takeoff that would happen sooner or later. But what was not said is that the new economic empires of the world, led by the U.S., were attentively watching what had been accomplished in Latin America at the cost of an impoverished working class. And the



empires thought to themselves: "Let us build our industries there for the working force is plenty and its cost is low." And so, transnational corporations, as they became known, went into Latin America and reaped greater profits there than those made in their headquarters. The world was made safe for capitalism.

There are two major factors that account for the type of development we have. First of all, in order to advance industries the largest Latin American economies, with the exception of Mexico, adopted agrarian policies that had two main interrelated goals: to foster the concentration of land in order to allow for the large-scale production of export products (soybean, wheat) which were needed to balance international trade, and simultaneously to force the exodus from rural areas to the outskirts of the cities in order to increase the supply of labor and decrease the bargaining power of the workers. These articulated policies have maintained Latin America as a haven for the investment of foreign based corporations.

Secondly, the implantation of industrial parks also demanded the creation of a compatible infrastructure. Roads, railroads, bridges, hydroelectric and nuclear power plants were built to provide for the necessary energy and strategic demands of the developing industries. The resources for this were drawn from U.S. and European banks. The result of which is the critical international debt that most Latin American countries face without the prospect of finding a short-term solution. And this continues to drain our resources and forces the continuation of the present agrarian policies.

Hence, we have what an economist called the "development of underdevelopment" in Latin America. Most of Latin America is not backward by economic or technological standards. Our economic history is not at the stage of nineteenth-century England. Latin America is on the other side of the same historical moment that the central capitalist economies are passing through. Gustavo Gutiérrez has correctly pointed out that we live on the

underside of history. Again, our problem is one of place and not of time. The Peruvian writer José Carlos Mariátegui put it in this way:

*We live in an era of monopolies and that is to say, of empires. The Latin American countries arrived too late at the capitalist competition. The first places have been already assigned. And by virtue of the opportunism that did not favor us, we are dependent, but we are not backward and we are not under-developed. This new character of our state of dependence is peculiar because of the unique features that the age old struggle between the rich and the poor has assumed.*

So far I have avoided the concepts of "center" and "periphery," of "First World" and "Third World" because I do not want to suggest that the problem of dependence is restricted to international relations. The same structure of dependence that has marked the relationship between Latin America and the North Atlantic world also unfolds internally. We are not only colonized by external powers. We are colonized internally as well by the dominant economic groups. This dual character of colonization belongs to the peculiar feature of what is called dependence.

This dual character started when the national oligarchies gained political hegemony with the struggles for political independence in the countries of Latin America. With the shift in the direction of development, the indigenous elite, the emerging bourgeoisie, had a nationalistic ideology, frequently at odds with international interests. But since the 1960s, with the arrival of transnational corporations, this nationalist elite is rapidly disappearing. Its industries cannot compete with the transnational corporations. They go bankrupt or they sell out. And even if they would be protected by national legislations international pressure would not allow this. A recent example from Brazil is illustrative. The Brazilian government decided, some years ago, to create a reserved and protected internal market for micro-computers in order to foster development of national technology in this field.



For some years, Brazil has been threatened with retaliatory measures by the U.S. government, which recently turned into an official boycott of several Brazilian exports to the U.S. Additionally there is little political support for the policy within the country itself. Those companies affected by the boycott are pressing the government to revise its position while transnational corporations that are already in the market of large computers are lobbying for the opening of the market for themselves.

The greater part of the Latin American elite is what political scientists call an "associated bourgeoisie." The case is so dramatic that instead of observing the expected improvement in the welfare of the working class, we observe its further economic impoverishment. In the majority of the industrialized countries in Latin America, the average wage of a worker decreased by 20 percent to 50 percent from 1965 to 1975. It then remained stable until 1985. Since then a further decrease has taken place. At the same time the executives of Latin American subsidiaries of foreign based transnational corporations on average received equal or even higher incomes than their counterparts in the U.S. or Europe. The result is a tremendous asymmetry in this process of development creating an ever increasing gap between capital and labor.

The military interventions in the political process of several Latin American nations from 1964 to 1973 assured that this asymmetry be sustained both politically and socially. These were the critical years for the establishment of those interests and as soon as space was occupied military regimes were not longer so necessary.

Dependence is the category broadly used in the social and human sciences of Latin America to describe the basic lack of vital space caused by this asymmetry. By vital space I mean the biological, social, cultural and ecological conditions necessary for life to develop all its material and spiritual potentialities. Peace must here be defined as the state of being appropriately related to vital space.

The lack of vital space is the most striking feature in the description of our situation. From the struggle of the native inhabitants' fight for their nation's land to the reality of the slums on the outskirts of the cities, from the concentration of land to the conflicts of Central America, from the pervasive phenomenon of migration to the experience of political exile, the lack of space is at the root of our experience of reality. This experience establishes a certain frame of reference for the pursuit of justice - justice being that which fosters belonging to vital space.

### III.

Now let me suggest how to go about setting down criteria in order to frame the quest for justice. I will basically draw from the features that determine dependence and are descriptive of what I have called displacement.

1. The accumulation of capital and the concentration of land engenders an economic system in which the people, the working people, are deprived of the control of their own interaction with nature and are instrumentalized for the sake of the accumulation of profit. This is the first fundamental factor of displacement and it pertains to the point of contact between subject and object and their interchange. This point of contact will be called labor.
2. The concentration of power and land, the manipulation of politics and the social stratification continually destroy any pattern of equity in interhuman relations. There is a systematic attack on all forms of alternative social organization that foster equity and inter-human solidarity. This is the second basic factor of displacement and pertains to the intersubjective set of relationships. This second point of contact will be called praxis.

These two basic factors of displacement can also be described positively as being the two basic relations of belonging to the vital space. The human relationship to nature and the interhuman relationships are fundamental ethical dimensions of human



life. From here I hope to draw some practical insights into the pursuit of justice in our journey to peace. Each of the two categories that describe the point of contact, labor and praxis, are mediating categories in the strategy of recovering vital space.

Let me start with labor, suggesting an analogy. All the amazing vitality in the process of nature from which life emerges, is a result of the active processes of living organisms. The biochemical "mechanisms" produce the variety, the inner unfolding and the reproduction of life within certain possibilities which are controlled by a genetic code of information called DNA. Metabolism is an encompassing term which applies to the living processes that result in organisms. During its evolution nature has produced organisms that are able to cope, for better or worse, with their environment which they can also change. The capacity of survival of an organism depends upon the homeostasis in the metabolic process. The lack of equilibrium in the metabolic exchange causes lack of adjustment.

Let us take this insight and move to a higher level. In the first volume of *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx defined labor "as being the process in which both the human being and nature participate, and in which the human being through his/her action mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism with nature." The term "metabolism" to define labor is helpful in the sense that through labor human life produces or reproduces itself shaping and re-shaping the environment.

The definition of the labor process includes four components:

- a) the product or the result of labor for the satisfaction of some need
- b) The ideal object mentally envisaged (telos)
- c) The material reality at hand
- d) The technological means available.

When these components of labor are socially available there is homeostasis in the labor process. The point is that dependence destroys this metabolism by a) gearing our economies to the satisfaction of the demands of profit only; b) by hindering the possibilities of envisaging the ideal result of a process that socially does not belong to the people; c) by creating a system of property that deprives people of employment and agricultural land; d) by turning technology into an end in itself, controlled by the interests of corporations.

A pertinent example of the destruction of adjustment in Latin America comes from Pizarro's conquest of the Inca Empire. What happened was not simply the plunder of the Incas' gold, but the destruction of a highly functional and egalitarian society homeostatically adjusted to the environment. This adjustment occurred not through a naive submission to nature, but indeed through high technological developments, particularly in engineering, agriculture, astronomy and political techniques.

The point here is not whether we should or should not have technology, but to which end it is being used, or whether it has become an end in itself - whether the goal is to plunder and conquer or to foster relations of belonging to the vital space. And in the sense of Mariategui we can say that when we woke up from the dream of independence no space had been left to be independent.

In this broader sense of labor we must call upon Hugo Assmann's statement that we must have "first the right to labor, and through it all the other rights." This, he says, "is the only acceptable ... hierarchy of priorities." The intrinsic dynamism of labor is certainly responsible for the development and achievement of more sophisticated levels of technological achievements which have made possible the control of nuclear energy or the construction of space laboratories. These achievements have created a higher demand on our ethical responsibilities. But no matter at which level we are operating, the criterion remains the same: In the decisions we take are we



being accountable to the metabolism of labor? Unfolding this question within the four components presented above we need to ask a) whether production is being demanded by a social need, b) whether the goal envisaged is socially shared, c) whether it is ecologically responsible, and d) whether the technology available is a means and not an end of the process.

When the metabolism of labor is destroyed the means become an end in themselves, metabolism becomes "diabolism" - the bringing together (meta-bole) becomes a throwing apart (dia-bole). The destruction of vital space is the result. This inversion of means and ends is well expressed in an old Portuguese "fado" - a nostalgic Portuguese folk song - that speaks of the times when the Portuguese empire could survive only by the plundering carried out on its sailing missions. The fado says "to sail is necessary, to live is no longer a need".

A fundamental point is still in want of an answer. I have used terms like "social need" of production and "social control" of technology. What do they mean and how are they established? In search for an answer we need to establish what defines the meaning of social. This will take us to another basic relation of belonging to vital space. Its reference is human interaction. The fundamental concept that we shall analyze is praxis.

Since the fourteenth century the distinction between *praxis* (doing and acting) and *poiesis* (production, creation labor) has been lost. Duns Scotus coined the Latin neologism "praxis" to cover both *actio* and *factio*. The precise Greek distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* was lost and so was Aristotle's insistence that one had to be distinguished from the other because "production (*poiesis*) aims at an end other than itself," while action's (*praxis*) end is doing whatever is being done for the sake of "doing it well." The focus of *praxis* is performance in the relation among human beings. This sets *praxis* at the level of human interaction where the goal is to maximize intersubjective relations and communication.

Praxis is only possible as interaction, and interaction is only improved by bringing in common expectations and actions that lead to human solidarity. Praxis is not simply an exchange of information within certain norms, given rules, and legal codes. Rather, it sets humans in a creative mode of interaction for the rectification of established patterns of human justice. This is called equity.

When the notion of dependence was used to define our situation, it was not only used to describe the economic reality of Latin America, but also the political conditions of a people living in displacement. Dependence has its political arm in imposing a pattern of behavior that is adjusted to the interests of the dominant class. Dependence fosters mechanisms that will not allow for the organization of those who live in displacement. It will attempt to destroy all types of human organization that aim at bringing about some equity in human relations. Even objective rights will set constraints on the achievement of equity.

Established patterns of justice and objective right, be it in civil or in the common law tradition, are either only the expression of the will of the dominant classes or groups or they are of little or no significance for the people they are supposed to protect. The point is simple: If one takes for granted a system of property - the occupation of space - such occupation will also determine the forms of space that are being put under dominion. The occupation of economic space, for example, will also tend to allow for the legal occupation of the corresponding cultural, social, political, legal and religious space. This seems to me to be the achievement of the capitalist revolution. There are no longer sacred places, reserved spaces, as for example in Brazil which is in the process of getting a new constitution. The single most urgent problem that we face is the distribution of land which also determines the urban crisis. There has been almost unanimous support for the agrarian reform which would change the basic spectrum of land distribution. It was becoming almost certain that a new and hopeful legislation would come about. Suddenly, the lobbying pressure of landowners in alliance with industrial corporations has reduced the project to almost nothing. As the



result of a concentrated effort by the churches and popular movements, over one million signatures in favor of a more radical reform were collected at the last minute. But not even this could challenge the powerful lobbies and their effort to occupy legal space. If one does not have space one does not have access to rights. If one does not have space one can only dream and this will not give one much more than a hopeful legislation for the kingdom of heaven. As important as that might be it will not make much difference. There is a peasant song in Brazil that goes more or less like this:

*We are a people of the land  
We are a people of God  
We want land on earth  
We have a land in heaven.*

Thus also in the legal field respect for due process will not be the solution. Langston Hughes put this sarcastically in his poem "Justice":

*That justice is a blind goddess  
Is a thing to which we blacks are wise  
Her bandage is two festering sores  
That once perhaps were eyes.*

So we are left with the context where the limits of life are too close for comfort, where people are hanging over the abyss by their nails alone.

The burning quest for meaning in existence is reduced to the interest of those who hold power and own space. Dependence is the last resort of a social, political and economic system geared exclusively to the maximization of profit. The emergence of the "doctrines of national security" in Latin American countries within the last two decades testifies to this effect. And the military governments, explicitly in power or disguised in civilian suits, are the rule, not the exception.

But it is also in this context that new and alternative forms of human association emerge. They are known as grassroot communities, communities of the poor and the dispossessed. What they have in common is precisely the displacement they share as the quest for vital space. Having lost the objective result of their labor what they can conquer and retain is associability. They gain dignity in human-to-human relations. In being faced with each other and in having interaction as their only reference they recognize the true profile of the human being drawn into the experiences of community participation. Those who cannot be defined by what they have or by the place they occupy are being defined by the way they interact. On the agenda is the urgent quest for the meaning of existence in face of the experience of displacement.

The curse is still with us. Only justice and all our efforts might stop it, to follow the suggestion of Alice Walker. But such justice can only be achieved if we become the theoreticians, the beholders of the incarnate God whose image appears in the human in its minimal condition. My contention is that this image of the truly human is shaped in the form of communities of those who longing for vital space are also prepared to become those whom they have been waiting for. Hence I am back to the beginning. We start by becoming theoreticians of an emerging church, emerging out of the cellars of humanity, from the underside of history, maybe only as a latent church but a church that will flourish and is flourishing beyond our expectations. I am particularly thinking of the displaced peoples of Latin America who not having any space in life find amongst themselves reason enough to "hang in there" through communal life. These are the people who also begin to lay the small signs of the new to come. And they start precisely by socially redefining the process of labor.

These communities become the image of an incarnate God who assumes the minimal condition of humans so as to raise them up to become the image of a complete humanity. The Brazilian sculptor, Guido Rocha, known for his sculptures of the crucified Christ, as a poor, skinny and tortured peasant screaming from



the cross, once was asked why he insisted so much on that same motif. He answered that ever since his childhood he had always wanted to portray his people and that nothing was as close to the image of the people as Christ. This is an insight that points to a truth that pertains to all Christians. In biblical anthropology the closeness to God is also manifested in the human made of humus - the creature of the Earth. In a similar sense we also have the affirmation of the slight human significance in this immense universe and yet it is precisely in that condition that the human finds his/her true stature. In all these paradoxical images the dignity of the human is certainly not the feature of an individual, but rather an attribute of a community as humanity linked in love. Here the true profile of what it means to be human is also raised, a community that shares in love the urge that fosters belonging and brings us back into a relation with nature that will restore our organic interaction with it.

Community is the organizational form, the strategy, of the kingdom. We must turn to these communities living the praxis of love, for there we will find our theoretical object that will point ways of justice in a journey to peace, to where space will no longer be divided or shared.

I look to these signs with hope and above all with the confidence that these communities are discovering and straightening ways of justice to thus become a messianic people. Messianic in the sense of being truly democratic, of having the people's power to make true the promise of the all too human God from Nazareth who noting that the people were like a flock without a shepherd said: Do it yourselves (Mk. 6), or in the words of June Jordan in a poem dedicated to the women of Soweto: "We are those who we have been waiting for."

# PEACE THROUGH JUSTICE

*Sibusiso Bengu*

1. We are involved in studies and action which emanated from the insights of the Lutheran World Federation Sixth Assembly which was held in Dar es Salaam in 1977. This Assembly adopted a statement titled "Socio-Political Functions and Responsibilities of Lutheran Churches" in which it:

welcomes the fact that the Lutheran World Federation is engaged in studies of the root causes of social and economic injustice in all their dimensions;

affirms the need for radical changes in the world's economic systems as one essential step toward attaining peace;

recommends that studies of root causes be carried out in consultation with the member churches, other ecumenical agencies and the specialized agencies of the United Nations.<sup>1</sup>

2. I am still amazed by the insight of the Sixth LWF Assembly that "radical changes in the world's economic systems" was "one essential step toward attaining peace". The subject of my presentation "Peace through Justice" is based on the understanding that radical changes in the world's economic systems is one essential step towards attaining peace. As we strive for radical changes in the world's economic systems we are involved in peace work and as I speak on peace through justice I am happily reaffirming what the LWF Sixth Assembly resolved. Indeed, there can be no peace without justice!



3. The reference I am making to the LWF Sixth Assembly resolution should be seen in light of the essay I wrote last year on "But Is Capitalism Reformable?" This question was raised as a response to the "Economic Justice for All", a pastoral letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the US Economy. Many Lutheran commentators have judged me as being radical instead of remembering that I am carrying out a mandate which came from the Sixth LWF Assembly calling for "radical changes in the world's economic systems as one essential step toward attaining peace". In this essay I state that:

It is urgent to wake up the churches of Europe and North America to the dreadful problem of survival faced by people in many parts of the world. Cardinal Arns urges that if the growing gap between the world's poor and its rich should lead to an explosion in the South towards the North, nobody would gain from such an explosion, certainly not the North. The alternative to the present global economic crisis lies in a new vision of the world, outside the capitalist system, in Cardinal Arns' judgment.<sup>2</sup>

4. When Cardinal Arns and I speak of an explosion, we are sure that some people should clearly understand us to be speaking of a war situation. Situations of social and economic injustice within and between nations have become more of a threat to peace than the East-West ideological conflict. We now have to ask ourselves why the gap between the poor and the rich has widened. Quite a lot can be said about the extent of deprivation and its terrible effects on human development. But that is not the real issue. The real issue is "why are the poor becoming poorer?" We see the cause of worsening poverty in oppressive social structures built on the domination of the poor nations by the rich nations of the world, the domination of the poor within nations by the rich and powerful and the social structures that are motivated by an unmitigated urge for profits.<sup>3</sup>

5. To put the case succinctly, the lesson of hunger might go like this :

Behind hunger stands poverty,  
Behind poverty stands powerlessness,  
Behind powerlessness stand

- the absence of resources to produce change
- the absence of knowledge to produce change
- the absence of health, energy and vitality
- the absence of organization for change
- the absence of leaders inspiring and guiding change.

Behind powerlessness stands the influence of the powerful, with the strength, resources, knowledge, organization and arms to keep their advantages to themselves. Behind poverty stands the willingness of the advantaged to benefit from the weakness of others. Behind world hunger stands - within nations and between nations - an unjust economic order.<sup>4</sup>

6. At the end of the Second World War the victors agreed on what some of us perceive as "cheap peace". The unjust economic order which was then set up rests on two pillars: a) a conceptual pillar which is based on a distorted conception of humanity and the world; b) an institutional one - with institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which are dominated by the rich nations, thus allowing the developing countries, which are supposed to benefit from them very little say. Built into these Bretton Woods institutions is a particular model of development which is being imposed on the Third World in the name of development aid and loans. The development concept which is passed on to the Third World is that "the more you borrow the more you develop". This model of development has thrown almost all the Third World countries into a bottomless pit of foreign debts. Instead of resources moving from the North to the South, more than 30 billion US\$ were paid to the North by countries of the South in 1986. The debt crisis which is now being faced by the South has reached alarming proportions. The truth of the matter is that there is simply no way in which the developing countries can pay the debts. It is also inhuman for Third World governments to neglect the development of their people in order to service the foreign debts. Much of the amounts



owed by Third World countries are illegitimate debts which have accrued owing to :

- a) high interest rates which have been unilaterally imposed by commercial banks or the countries of the North;
- b) unequal terms of trade, and
- c) the international financial gangsterism, e.g., the Marcos debts in the Philippines and the debts which are allowed to the governments of South Africa and Chile.

In 1987, the IMF has given 1.7 million US\$ to the South African government. This means that even before we are free we are already debtors. The world would expect that in a new South Africa we should regard those debts as legitimate!

7. The unjust economic order was of course instituted during the colonial era. As the British economist, Barbara Ward, reminds us, the reason for the establishment of colonies was in the first place that these were seen as possessing great wealth whilst being politically and militarily disorganized or weak. Economic gain played the primary role. The colonial powers took over "to get materials the home country needed, and to keep everyone else out". Colonizers compelled the local populace to divert their labor resources from meeting their own needs to meet the needs (including the "need" for slaves) of the colonizing power, be that England, France, Holland, Spain, Portugal or, belatedly, Germany. There were at least two crucial consequences of this economic process. First the material exploitation of the colonized lands contributed to the material and industrial growth of the colonial powers, and, secondly, viable local economies were disrupted and their autonomy replaced by dependence upon the colonial power. This is what Walter Rodney in his book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, analyses as a cruel process of the underdevelopment of the Third World by Europe. The basis of a split-level world was laid in this way. Whether old style or new style, colonialism is a relationship between two countries in which

the following happens: one country uses its power to manipulate the behavior of another in such a way that its own business interests gain access to the natural resources and markets of the manipulated country in terms which would never be tolerated if the bargaining took place between equals.

8. Such behavior between individuals is called unfair. When it takes place on a larger scale, as between social classes or nations, it is called exploitation. Colonialism is an exploitative relationship between nations. The new style is called neo-colonialism by those who find themselves the weaker partners in the deal. The strong partners do not like the term. They usually describe the imbalanced situation as the natural working of the free market. They protest that weaker societies would not be so weak if their leaders were less corrupt, or less callous of the needs of their own people. The argument tends to overlook the fact that over centuries (and again recently in Chile) leaders who were neither corrupt nor callous nor willing to play along with the status quo benefiting foreign interests or the elite of their own country have often, when all else failed, been forcibly removed in order to end their leadership. The very tenacity of the powers of an exploitative elite in some Third World countries (notably in Latin America) depends upon support from abroad from those who profit from the relationship of neo-colonialism.

9. The point we are making here is that there can be no peace whilst two-thirds of the world live in poverty which is deliberately being caused by institutions which serve the nations of the North. The security of the countries of the North will only be real when there is security for all the nations and people of the world. Dr. Philip Potter rightly argues that:

Any nation which seeks security by destroying or threatening to destroy another nation or people is deluding itself. The security of powerful nations cannot be achieved by destabilizing the political, economic and social structures of other nations. The cause of security is not maintained by humiliation of nations or brutality to people. Security has to be sought in



mutual trust and respect between nations, in enabling people to participate fully in the life of their nations and across national borders, and in cooperation between nations and peoples for peace with justice for all.<sup>5</sup>

10. Superpower rivalry in the name of national security is more than ever before focused on the control of, or influence over, developing countries. More and more people are appalled by the continued failure of Western leaders to escape a narrow, short-term view of national interests. Where disarmament and cooperation with East and South for development is necessary they have opted for militarism and confrontation. Since the end of World War II the East-West tensions have been translated into many wars that are being fought in the Third World. When Libya and Egypt threaten to go to war against each other it is quite obvious that the confrontation between Moscow and Washington is behind it all. Similarly when President Reagan accuses Secretary General Gorbachev of violating human rights in Afghanistan he hardly ever recognizes that the United States government is violating not only the rights of people in Nicaragua or Angola or in the Middle East but also that the US government violates the rights to development of so many people in the Third World.

11. There are several cases in the world where justice has been sacrificed for the sake of peace. Claire Hirshfield in her article, "Blacks, Boers and Britons: the Anti-War Movement in England and the 'native issue', 1899-1902" traces how leading British liberals reconciled their traditional support for Black people's rights with their strong anti-war feelings during the Anglo-Boer war in South Africa. Before the war British liberals had convincingly justified the war as part of a consistent effort to secure justice for Blacks in the Transvaal. The Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, had promised that "the rights of all races are the objects which the British government are now pursuing and which they will ... preserve to the end". A Tory back-bencher had also queried, "which is ... the greater evil to fight on behalf of the principles of freedom and equal rights, or to hand over millions of natives to a race who ... have shown themselves utterly incapable of dealing

with native tribes?" Hirshfield clearly shows that the same British liberals who had promised that they would not purchase a shameful peace by abandoning the rights of the Black population subsequently realized that peace would be jeopardized by insisting on non-racial citizenship in South Africa. The article rightly concludes that White unity was allowed to take precedence over the concept of human rights, as had been the case earlier in the United States, where the victorious North had similarly failed to enforce Black suffrage in the South after Reconstruction.

12. In spite of their genuine struggle for human rights, liberal elements within South Africa today are trapped in the South African government's law-and-order campaign.

13. The South African White opposition parties in their call for justice have not fully accepted a one-person one-vote solution as a basis for democracy in the country. None of these White liberal parties have come out fully in support of the liberation movement, since this is seen as disrupting law and order. Many well-intentioned South African White liberals link peace and justice to law and order and, therefore, end up sacrificing justice in favor of temporary settlements of the conflict.

14. "Peace" is the most misused if not misunderstood word today. Politicians continue to talk of their quest for peace while their actions openly violate it. The big powers of the world have elaborate peace negotiations and yet the growth of their expenditures on armaments is alarming. The US \$500 billion which was spent daily on armaments in 1981 increases the danger of a nuclear holocaust, gives unacceptable power to a few countries and diverts human and material resources from the satisfaction of human needs. In spite of the impressive peace efforts of the peace movements in the Northern hemisphere, there is still a glaring lack of linkage between peace and development. There is very little to suggest that the wisdom of "turning swords into ploughshares" has been fully understood. There is an overemphasis on the East-West conflict, and the North-South dimension is usually forgotten if not ignored. It must be openly pointed out



that the governments, the peace movements and the churches of the Northern hemisphere are deluding themselves to think that there can be peace in the Northern hemisphere that would exclude the Southern hemisphere. The North-South conflict, with its impact on masses of people who are struggling for justice and survival, is more of a threat to peace than the ideological East-West conflict.<sup>6</sup>

15. In conclusion let me sound a warning which was made by the late Professor Roy Preiswerk of the University of Geneva about the linkage between peace and justice. He warned Europe and North America as follows:

It is high time ... and perhaps not too late ... that we abandon our democratic hypocrisies and double standards of morality. It is time to understand the outcry of the colored and hungry world for freedom ... not only formal, but economic freedom. It is time to support political and economic structures, however different they may be from ours, through which these aims can be achieved. Otherwise, future historians might be compelled to range among the sad chapters of history the one which deals with democracy and free enterprise.<sup>7</sup>

16. This strongly worded warning to countries of the North is a pointer to how "peace through justice" can be achieved in the whole world. The strategy for eliminating Third World poverty is a political one. It starts from the premise that the Western power structure is partly responsible for the political and economic mechanisms that create and perpetuate poverty in the Third World. The strategy then is to try to persuade/cajole/force Western institutions to change their behavior towards or in the Third World countries. Solidarity action can also be taken by workers in transnational companies and the churches.

17. Another strategy would be for funds from the North to be given to support the "organized poor" in the Third World. This strategy would be more effective than a fundraising effort to add to - say - War on Want's support for the poor.

## NOTES

- 1 *In Christ - A New Community: The Proceedings of the Sixth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation*, ed. by A. Sovik, LWF, Geneva, 1977, pp. 176-177
- 2 Charles P. Lutz (ed.), *God, Goods and the Common Good*, Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1987, p. 78
- 3 "UNCTAD V and the People" - a paper prepared by the Ecumenical Secretariat for UNCTAD V, p. 3
- 4 Patricia L. Kutzner, "World Hunger: Getting at the Roots", in *Hunger Notes* (July 1976), p. 1
- 5 Philip Potter, "Choose Life!" in *The Security Trap: Arms Race, Militarism and Disarmament: A Concern for Christians*, ed. by José-Antonio Viera Gallo, Rome, IDOC, 1982, p. 224
- 6 S.M.E. Bengu, "Peace at the Expense of Justice and Humanitarian Principles", in *Peace and Change, A Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (1982), p. 35
- 7 Roy A. Preiswerk, "South Africa: Before the Storm", in *Ivory Tower*, Vol. 62, No. 77 (1961), pp. 4-5



# ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS FOR PEACE:

## AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND METHODIST STATEMENTS ON PEACE

*Marcia Bunge*

The purpose of this conference, as outlined by Dr. Planer-Friedrich, has been twofold: 1. to define more clearly the Christian responsibility for peace with justice; and 2. to contribute to the formulation of the theological foundation for an ecumenical peace ethic. Our task has been, therefore, both theological and ecumenical. One way to address both tasks of the conference is to study the theological and ethical line of reasoning of various church statements on peace, paying attention to the grounds that are given for these positions. By examining the ways that these positions are both similar and diverse, we can gain resources for both our theological and our ecumenical concerns for peace.

My aim today, then, is to examine the grounds for the positions on peace that are stated in two major documents from churches in the United States: "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," written by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and published in 1983; and "In Defense of Creation," written by the United Methodist Council of Bishops and published in 1986. I have chosen to examine these statements because both are substantial documents (each about 100 pages in length) that not only suggest specific policies on nuclear arms but also give grounds for particular positions. Their specificity and their lines of reasoning are important for our purpose of defining our responsibility for peace and examining the ways that positions of various churches are similar and diverse.

My presentation has three parts. In Part One I will examine the common assumptions of both documents. I will then turn to the grounds for the positions on peace in these documents by looking, in Part Two, at their use of the Bible and, in Part Three, at their use of the Just War Tradition. In each part of the paper, I will draw some conclusions about common and diverse lines of thought and their implications for a theology of peace.

## **Part One: Common assumptions**

Both documents begin with three common assumptions. First, they both claim that the issue of peace is an urgent and grave problem in our time, especially because of the dangers that nuclear weapons pose. Each statement begins with the claim that the invention and build-up of nuclear weapons threaten life itself. The Catholic bishops open with a recognition of the nuclear threat by claiming, "Nuclear weaponry has drastically changed the nature of warfare, and the arms race poses a threat to human life and human civilization which is without precedent."<sup>1</sup> For the Catholics, it is a threat that affects every people, for it "transcends religious, cultural, and national boundaries."<sup>2</sup> The Methodist bishops also voice their concern and emphasize the threat that nuclear weapons pose to all life on earth. They begin their document with the words, "We write in defense of creation. We do so because the creation itself is under attack. Air and water, trees and fruits and flowers, birds and fish and cattle, all children and youth, women and men live under the darkening shadows of a threatening nuclear winter."<sup>3</sup> Both documents agree, then, that nuclear weapons have created an urgent problem and threaten human life and the entire planet.

The second common assumption of the documents is that the church has a responsibility to address this threat. It cannot be treated with indifference. Both documents call on their readers to reflect on their responsibility in the light of this crisis. The Catholic bishops express the responsibility in this way: "faith does not insulate us from the challenges of life; rather it intensifies our desire to help solve them precisely in the light of the



good news which has come to us in the person of Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup> They aim their document both to the church and to the broader public, hoping to help Catholics form their consciences and to contribute to the wider public policy debate. The Methodists also recognize this responsibility and call on the church "to more faithful witness and action in the face of this worsening nuclear crisis."<sup>5</sup>

At the basis of these two common assumptions about the urgency of the nuclear threat and the responsibility of the church, we find that the documents also share presuppositions about the nature and task of theology and of the church. Theology is to address the problems of our time in the light of faith. It must not remain indifferent to contemporary problems, but rather use its resources to address them. Further, the church is to act to address these problems. It should not simply reflect on them, but rather apply its reflection to responsible action.

This leads us to one final common assumption of the statements: that reflection on this urgent problem is the task of all members of the church. This assumption is seen both in the process through which the documents were written and in the policies that each document recommends for the church. Both documents were first drafted by a committee of bishops. The bishops then invited members of their respective churches to submit suggestions for revision. The bishops then revised the document in the light of these suggestions. Their invitation for revision by members of the church indicates the seriousness with which both churches claim that peace is the task of all members.

This claim is also reflected in the ecclesiastical policies suggested in both documents. Both of them encourage continuing dialogue about peace. The bishops of both churches do not intend their documents to be a "final word" on peace; rather, they hope their statements will foster dialogue on several levels. First, both documents give specific suggestions for dialogue within their respective churches. They support educational programs to help members understand issues of war and peace, they encourage

prayers for peace, and they suggest teaching a reverence for life. Second, the two documents also encourage ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue about peace. The Methodist statement especially underscores the importance of ecumenical dialogue, claiming that ecumenism is a new synonym for peacemaking.<sup>6</sup> Finally, both documents aim to foster dialogue with the U.S. government and with the wider public.

On the basis of the three primary assumptions, we can already gather several implications for a theology of peace. According to both documents, a theology of peace must recognize the seriousness of the threat posed by nuclear weapons and carefully outline the features of this threat. This means theologians should consult governmental policies, political leaders, and scientists in order to understand the nuclear issues clearly.

A theology of peace must also show why the church has a responsibility to address these issues. Otherwise, the nuclear problem can be understood as an interest for only some people in the church rather than the responsibility of the church as a whole.

Furthermore, a theology of peace should take seriously the responsibility for peacemaking of all members of the church. This can be done by inviting members of the church to take part in the process of writing ecclesiastical position papers. This simple invitation appears not only to deepen each member's sense of responsibility but also to increase the status of position papers. If members of the church help write the papers, then they will perhaps pay closer attention to what is said in the final draft.

Finally, a theology of peace must foster dialogue within a denomination, with other Christians, with the general public, and with other faiths and nations. In other words, a theology of peace must be truly ecumenical. It must understand the ecumenical task in the comprehensive sense of "worldwide." Broad ecumenical dialogue is crucial, for the nuclear problem affects all people



and can be addressed only with the cooperation of several nations. Both ecclesiastical statements on peace encourage ecumenical dialogue, but the term "ecumenical" is often either unclear or confined to inter-Christian dialogue. It is important for a theology of peace to define the term clearly and with sufficient comprehensiveness.

Let us turn, now, to the resources for theological reflection used in the documents. The question we now ask is: What are the resources the documents use to understand Christian responsibility in the face of nuclear threat? The major resources for both documents are the Bible and the just war tradition. This is consistent with the traditional resources for theology in both churches. Contemporary Catholic moral theology emphasizes reflection on the present situation, the use of Scripture, and the guidance of human reason.<sup>7</sup> The Methodists base their positions on the four-fold grounds of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.<sup>8</sup> Let us reflect, then, on the way that each document uses the resources of Scripture and the just war tradition.

## **Part Two: The Bible**

Both documents claim that the Bible is a source of their reflection on the nuclear problem. Even though both refer to the Bible, neither document, however, appeals primarily to the Bible for support of its particular judgment on nuclear weapons. In both cases, the Bible provides more a direction and vision than the grounds for specific policies or actions. The two documents present biblical visions that are at once similar and diverse. Let us turn briefly to each vision.

The Catholic bishops insist that a theology of peace should be grounded in Scripture. They say that it "provides the foundation for confronting war and peace today."<sup>9</sup> Yet from the beginning the Catholics call attention to the limits of the use of Scripture. They recognize that its use is conditioned by three factors: 1. peace can be understood in various ways in various contexts to

mean different things; 2. Scripture reflects varied historical situations; and 3. Scripture contains no specific treatise on war and peace.<sup>10</sup>

Despite these limits, the Catholics do claim peace is a characteristic of the covenant relation between God and Israel in the Old Testament and is central to the notion of the kingdom of God in the New Testament. The main focus of the Catholics' reflection on the biblical vision of peace, however, is the kingdom of God. The characteristics of this kingdom are love, peace, and justice.<sup>11</sup> Jesus proclaimed the reign of God - a reality in which God's power is manifested. He also depicted the conduct of one who lives under God's reign. One is not only to follow the divine law but also to go beyond the law to love and to forgive others. Love is the active force of the kingdom - a love which seeks even to love one's enemies. Through Jesus' death and resurrection he reconciles the world and God, giving the world his peace. Having received God's gift of peace in Christ, we are called to act in ways that are consonant with the justice, forgiveness, and love of God's reign.

The Methodist bishops, too, claim that their theology of peace is based on the Bible. They find the biblical notion of peace best defined through the Old Testament notion of shalom. Shalom, as a positive and just peace, means a harmony among all creatures and a peace with justice. "Shalom is the sum total of moral and spiritual qualities in a community whose life is in harmony with God's good creation."<sup>12</sup> This harmony was broken by sin. But Jesus comes to us as the promise of shalom. Jesus commands us to love our enemies, and he himself never resorted to armed violence. His crucifixion is a testimony to the power of forgiving love and non-violence, and his resurrection is the sign that God does reign. Christians are called to be evangelists of shalom.

Although both documents use different terms to speak about their biblical visions of peace, it is clear there are similarities between their visions. They both claim that the Bible does offer a particular vision of peace. This peace is a harmony of all creation and the human family; it implies a reverence for life and the dig-



nity of all people. This peace is also a peace with justice. It is not simply a unity of people, but rather a unity that rejects oppression and injustice. Finally, this peace is marked by love and forgiveness, even of one's enemies. This implies that using force must be understood only as a last resort in the quest for peace.

Both documents claim that this biblical vision of peace is the common basis for two often contradictory Christian approaches to the issue of war - pacifism and the just war tradition. The Methodist bishops claim that both traditions share a common presupposition against war.<sup>13</sup> The Catholics recognize that both traditions seek to serve the common good, defend peace,<sup>14</sup> and "testify to the Christian conviction that peace must be pursued and rights defended within moral restraints and in the context of defining other basic human values."<sup>15</sup> The Catholic bishops even support the pacifist option for some individuals.<sup>16</sup>

Although both documents see the biblical vision as the common basis of pacifism and of the just war tradition, they recognize that the two traditions part company in their use of the Bible. It is here, too, that the documents part company with pacifism. Both the Catholic and the Methodist bishops use the Bible as a framework for the discussion of the use of nuclear weapons. The Bible does not, however, provide detailed answers to specific questions of war and peace today, according to both documents.

Pacifism, in contrast, tends to use the Bible not only as a general guide for ethical reflection, as the just war tradition does, but as a way to find specific guidelines for action. The pacifists look at the teaching and example of Christ in the New Testament. Like the bishops of our two documents, the pacifists see that Christ emphasized forgiveness and the love of neighbor, and even of one's enemies. Yet unlike the bishops, the pacifists interpret these biblical passages to mean that any use of arms is incompatible with the example of Christ. It is on these grounds that pacifists condemn the use of any weapons, whether conventional or nuclear.

The Catholic and Methodist bishops do not interpret the Bible as pacifists do because the bishops believe there are cases in which the use of force is justified. For both, a country has the right to defend itself against unjust aggression. The Catholics give more explicit theological grounds for the use of force than the Methodists. Immediately following their discussion on the biblical notion of the kingdom of God, the Catholics turn to the theme of the "Kingdom and History." In this section of the document they say that because of sin, the kingdom cannot be realized completely on earth.<sup>17</sup> There can be no totally peaceful society.<sup>18</sup> Christians are called to live in the tension between the vision of God's kingdom and its concrete fulfillment in history.<sup>19</sup> The fact of sin and aggression in the world may legitimize the use of force in some cases.<sup>20</sup> According to the Catholics, countries have the right to protect and defend themselves against unjust aggression.<sup>21</sup> The bishops conclude that love is the only real hope of Christians, but force is sometimes justified.<sup>22</sup> We see, then, that although both documents share a common vision of peace with pacifism on the basis of the Bible, the Bible can be used in different ways to support two very different responses to the question of war - pacifism and defense.

From the brief discussion of the use of the Bible in these two documents, we can draw some important implications for our task at this conference. We see, first of all, that a common vision of peace can be discovered in the Bible, whether one focuses on the biblical notion of the kingdom of God or of shalom. Their common vision is a peace with justice that is empowered by love and forgiveness, made possible through Jesus Christ. The two documents taken together encourage a theology of peace that gathers and compares various biblical notions of peace and that studies carefully the relationships among peace, justice, love, and forgiveness in them.

We have also learned that this vision of peace is the common basis of two often opposed moral responses - pacifism and the just war tradition. This discovery is very important for ecumeni-



cal discussions of peace, for it encourages us to find the common threads that exist among positions that at first appear to be in opposition.

Finally, we have seen that even though varied positions claim to be based on the Bible, they can differ in their use of the Bible and thus differ in their stance on weapons. This challenges theologians to evaluate how each position uses the Bible and to examine the grounds for such diverse positions. In the light of a pacifist position, for example, another position that accepts the use of arms would have to address such questions very clearly: What are the biblical grounds for the use of arms? How is the use of arms compatible with Christ's message of love and forgiveness, and especially the love of one's enemies? Does the notion of the unrealized kingdom of God in any way legitimate the institution of war? If so, how? especially when such a notion does not legitimate other evils, such as slavery? These are questions that both documents fail to address adequately and that a theology of peace must address, especially when such diverse responses to the issue of war all claim to be founded on the Bible.

### **Part Three: The Just War tradition**

Let us now turn to the second main resource of the two documents - the just war tradition. Even though both documents recognize the importance of using the Bible, their clearest stance on the use of nuclear weapons is not based on the Bible, but rather on the just war tradition. On the basis of this tradition, both documents say a clear "no" to nuclear warfare, and they call for a halt to the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons.<sup>23</sup> The way the two documents respond to deterrence does, however, differ. Let us look at the use of the just war tradition and at the response to deterrence in each document.

The Catholic letter offers a thorough outline of the criteria for the just war theory. The bishops carefully explain that the just war theory evolved as a way to prevent war, and if war cannot be avoided the just war theory seeks to restrict its horrors. It does

so by offering strict criteria for the resort to war to be morally justified and by providing conditions that must be met during battle.

In the light of these principles the bishops analyze the morality of modern warfare. They say that certain aspects of Soviet and U.S. policy fail the tests of discrimination and proportionality.<sup>24</sup> The criterion of discrimination prohibits attacks on civilians and non-military targets. The intentional killing of innocent civilians is always wrong. Although the U.S. declares it will not target the civilian populations, the bishops question whether or not a nuclear war could be limited to military targets, for even nuclear strikes on military targets would involve massive civilian casualties.<sup>25</sup> The criterion of proportionality demands that the damage inflicted in war be proportionate to the good expected. U.S. officials say they are prepared to retaliate in a massive way, if necessary. This clearly raises the problem of proportionality. Even if officials were to make a clear statement restricting their targets, the risk of detonation or error, which could mean total warfare, also raises the question whether or not the nuclear arms race is a proportionate response to aggression.<sup>26</sup>

For those who try to defend the morality of nuclear weapons by appealing to the idea of "limited nuclear war," the bishops raise a skeptical voice. They give two reasons for their skepticism. First, a limited war could easily escalate into total warfare.<sup>27</sup> Second, a nuclear attack on military facilities would affect many civilians on the periphery of these facilities. Furthermore, the spread of radiation because of winds would kill many people and contaminate many areas.<sup>28</sup> The bishops list a series of other questions that challenge the meaning of limited nuclear warfare<sup>29</sup> and hope that international leaders will resist any assumption that nuclear conflict can be limited.<sup>30</sup>

The Methodist bishops also say "no" to nuclear war.<sup>31</sup> They do so, like the Catholics, on the grounds that nuclear weapons fail to meet just war criteria. They point out three (not just two) criteria, however, that are not met by nuclear warfare.<sup>32</sup> In addi-



tion to failing the tests of discrimination and proportionality, nuclear weapons also fail the criterion of a "reasonable hope of success" in achieving a just peace.<sup>33</sup>

On the basis of the just war tradition alone, both documents propose the following policies to the U.S. government: 1. a halt to the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons; 2. a reduction of arsenals; 3. a test ban; 4. acceptance of a no-first-use policy; 5. a strengthening of international relations, especially through a renewed commitment to common security institutions like the United Nations.

Although both the Catholic and the Methodist bishops agree on these policies on the basis of the just war tradition, the two documents express different positions on deterrence. The Catholics arrive at a "conditional moral acceptance of deterrence."<sup>34</sup> They believe that the policy of deterrence may be required for national defense. This means the Catholics allow for the possession of nuclear weapons. The Catholics do not, however, approve of all forms of deterrence. They claim that the intended use of weapons should meet just war criteria. They also claim that deterrence is a transitional strategy that would not be adequate on a long-term basis, and they urge the development of non-nuclear defensive strategies "as rapidly as possible."<sup>35</sup> They are, then, skeptical about the moral acceptability of deterrence, but they do not reject it altogether.

The Methodist bishops reject the policy of deterrence. They say "deterrence must no longer receive the church's blessing even as a temporary warrant for the maintenance of weapons."<sup>36</sup> The Methodists clearly recognize the difference between their own position and that of the Catholic bishops. In contrast to the Catholics, the Methodist bishops are ready to say that deterrence is immoral.

If both documents base their arguments on the just war theory, then how is it possible that their positions on deterrence vary? How can one support "the conditional moral acceptance of deterrence" and the other condemn deterrence altogether? It is here,

on their stance on deterrence, that we see other grounds for their positions entering the argument and shaping their interpretation of the just war tradition. I believe it is important for our purposes to outline carefully their positions on deterrence, to look at the grounds the two documents give for their positions, and to raise questions about their adequacy.

The Catholic bishops do not clearly express the exact grounds for their conditional acceptance of deterrence, but they emphasize two points of the just war theory that seem to justify their position. First, the bishops emphasize the responsibility of a government to defend its country and its allies against attack.<sup>37</sup> The bishops believe that deterrence may be a necessary form of defense, "the deterrence of nuclear attack may require nuclear weapons for a time."<sup>38</sup> Second, the bishops imply that deterrence is justified because it is a way to protect values which are important for humanity. They say Pope John Paul II judges deterrence morally acceptable in reference to a dual moral duty: to prevent nuclear war and to protect and preserve those key values of "justice, freedom, and independence which are necessary for personal dignity and national integrity."<sup>39</sup> The right of a country to defend itself and to protect values of human dignity appear to be the ground, then, for their conditional acceptance of deterrence.

Immediately following their moral acceptance of deterrence, however, the bishops raise two questions that subject deterrence to rigid restrictions, giving the bishops grounds for their "conditional" (not unconditional) acceptance of deterrence. First, in line with their criteria of discrimination and proportionality, they ask whether the intention to kill the innocent is part of the U.S. policy of deterrence. Even if the U.S. says this is not its intention, the bishops say that such statements resolve neither the moral problem of massive civilian casualties that will result indirectly from a nuclear attack nor the moral problem of escalation.<sup>40</sup> Second, the doctrine of deterrence often is joined with strategy statements that assume nuclear war has moral limits. In



line with their skepticism of limited nuclear war, the bishops raise doubts about such strategies. These two questions lead them to make several specific evaluations about the present policy of deterrence and to demand that deterrence be a step on the way to progressive disarmament.<sup>41</sup>

At this point we must raise questions about the adequacy of the bishops' conditional acceptance of deterrence. I believe their position is inadequate on several grounds, but let me speak here only of its inadequacy in terms of the bishops' own argument. The presupposition of the just war theory is that political policies of defense must adhere to certain criteria in order to be morally acceptable. The bishops raise serious questions about the ability of deterrence to fulfill the criteria of discrimination and proportionality. They are uncertain whether or not a nuclear war can be limited. If the bishops seriously doubt that the criteria of just war can be satisfied by the present policy of deterrence, i.e., if they are uncertain that deterrence can fulfill the requirements of a just war, then how can they accept deterrence even "conditionally"? Does this not contradict their assumption that policies must fulfill the just war criteria in order to be morally acceptable? Their conditional acceptance of deterrence appears to contradict the basic assumptions of their own argument.

In contrast to the Catholic bishops, the Methodist bishops reject the policy of deterrence. They claim they base both their rejection of deterrence and thus their rejection of the Catholic position on the just war theory.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, like the Catholics, the Methodists do not show explicitly how a just war theory leads to their position on deterrence. Instead, like the Catholics, they must emphasize one aspect of the just war theory in order to justify their position. In contrast to the Catholics' emphasis on the responsibility of defense and the protection of values central to human dignity, the Methodists emphasize the notion of justice, for they see this as the prime concern of the just war theory.<sup>43</sup>

The Methodists, therefore, present several ways in which deterrence offends justice both nationally and internationally. For example, they claim that deterrence is unjust because it denies nuclear weapons to some nations.<sup>44</sup> They argue that if nuclear weapons are indeed a legitimate form of defense for some nations, then why are other nations denied their possession? Deterrence is also unjust according to the Methodists because it violates Article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.<sup>45</sup> Further, deterrence is unjust because it threatens the security and life of non-aligned nations,<sup>46</sup> for nuclear hostilities can have terrible environmental effects on countries far beyond the borders of conflicting nations. Above all, deterrence is unjust because money is used for the arms race that could be used for the poor, the hungry, and the sick.<sup>47</sup> The Methodists link the arms race to increasing problems of minorities,<sup>48</sup> injustices against women,<sup>49</sup> and lack of funds for the economic development of other countries.<sup>50</sup>

The Methodists give other grounds for their rejection of deterrence that are not based on the notion of justice. It is here that we see still further lines of argumentation outside that of the just war theory. First, the Methodists give confessional grounds for their position. They say that deterrence is contrary to the vision of shalom, for it is idolatrous. In the vision of shalom, God is sovereign. The sovereignty of God means that human vengeance is evil.<sup>51</sup> Only God has the power of ultimate judgment. The nuclear powers presume to usurp this sovereignty of God over all nations and peoples, creating what the Methodists call "nuclear idolatry."<sup>52</sup> This idolatry assumes that human beings have the power of ultimate judgment and destruction of other nations.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the Methodists reject deterrence on the grounds of idolatry.

The Methodists also reject deterrence on the basis of a particular understanding of national security. They believe that genuine security requires economic strength, environmental health, quality education, and global cooperation. They believe only a new order



of common security and interdependent institutions offer hope for an enduring peace.<sup>54</sup> The bishops believe that nuclear deterrence blinds its proponents to this kind of genuine security.<sup>55</sup>

The Methodists also give purely economic grounds for their position on nuclear war in general and on deterrence. They claim that the decline of the American economy and problems of unemployment are related to high military spending. They deny a common assumption that military spending contributes to growth rates in the U.S.<sup>56</sup> They believe that the American economy has failed to keep pace with other industrial nations for three reasons: 1. the disproportionate allocation of scientific and technical personnel to military production; 2. the commitment of 70 percent of governmental research funds to weapons programs; and 3. the preference of U.S. industries for short-term profits at the expense of long-term planning.<sup>57</sup> The Methodists imply, then, that a purely economic argument can lead to the rejection of deterrence.

Finally, the Methodist bishops give psychological grounds for their position. They believe that the leaders of the nation responsible for nuclear weapons live under the psychological strain of the contradiction in "the rational arrangement of weapons of suicidal terror."<sup>58</sup> For all citizens, the nuclear arms race has two psychological effects. People must live under the strain of the contradiction between "inordinate confidence in the rationality of decision makers and the absolute terror of annihilation."<sup>59</sup> The nuclear arms race also creates a sense of powerlessness. Citizens of nuclear countries become vulnerable to what one psychiatrist calls "psychological numbing: a simultaneous denial that the nuclear problem exists and a sense of helplessness to cope with it."<sup>60</sup> These psychological problems are related to a sense of futurelessness and a loss of self-respect.<sup>61</sup> The ill effects that such problems create in a society are grounds enough to reject the arms race.

One strength of the Methodist bishops' position on deterrence is that it uses several grounds for support, basing their position not only on the just war tradition but also on strictly confessional

grounds, on a definition of security, and on economic and psychological grounds. The use of such varied grounds helps readers to recognize the validity of arguments outside the just war tradition and shows that several arguments can lead to the same conclusion.

Another strength of the Methodist position is that it emphasizes the relationship between peace and justice. Throughout the document, the bishops take seriously the importance of justice in the biblical notion of shalom. They also point to the importance of justice in the just war theory itself. This emphasis on justice helps them connect the biblical vision of peace to the just war theory. It also highlights the centrality of justice in any discussion of peace.

A major weakness of the Methodist document is that it does not outline the varied grounds of its position carefully and show how these grounds lead to particular positions. Very often the document appears to be more a list of grounds and policies than a detailed and unified theological argument. Even the relation between justice and the just war theory is not discussed clearly. A strength of the Catholic bishops is that they outline the elements of their argument more carefully than the Methodists and pay more attention to the arguments' coherence. Even the Catholic bishops' discussion of the just war criteria is more thorough.

A weakness of both documents is that they do not offer ecological grounds for a position on nuclear weapons. The production and testing of these weapons has already damaged the environment and caused illness in human beings and animals. It is especially surprising that the Methodist bishops do not address the ecological problems generated by nuclear weapons, since these bishops want their document to be a defense of all creation.

On the basis of this discussion of the use of the just war theory in the two documents and their diverse positions on deterrence, I would like to draw three implications of the just war tradition for a theology of peace. The two documents show, first, that the just war tradition can provide a rich foundation for the discussion of



nuclear arms, for it offers grounds from which to evaluate policies. Further, it appears that there are common conclusions that can be drawn from this tradition. Both documents suggest similar policies on the basis of the just war tradition alone. This creates exciting possibilities for ecumenical discussions.

Second, the two documents also imply that a theology of peace must be ready to show the limits of the just war tradition and to name clearly the grounds that are used outside of it. In these two documents the just war tradition was not able to lead to a common policy on deterrence. Both documents claimed to base their position on the just war theory, and yet other factors played a role in their arguments. This challenges any theology of peace to clarify the grounds for its position carefully, especially in relation to deterrence. It must be ready to admit other ideas and grounds that support a position but perhaps fall outside the just war tradition. It must also be ready to discuss the place of justice in its use of the just war tradition.

Third, and finally, the Methodist statement shows that a theology of peace can use several arguments outside the just war tradition to support a position and that a theology of peace should explore similarities among positions built upon very diverse arguments. Exploring relationships among the just war tradition and political, economic, ecological, psychological, biblical, and confessional arguments, for example, can not only strengthen one's own position but also foster broad ecumenical dialogue. If a theology of peace does use these arguments, however, then it must present them clearly and show their relationships.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the two documents have provided us with several resources for the twofold task of defining our Christian responsibility for peace and of formulating our theological foundation for an ecumenical peace ethic. Both documents clearly claim that Christians have a responsibility for peace with justice. This is supported on the basis of the Bible, even if one approaches this

from the notion of the kingdom of God or of shalom. It is also the assumption of the just war theory that the Christian has a responsibility to seek peace. This tradition even appears to provide us with specific policies on the way this responsibility is to be carried out. This strong conviction of the Christian task for peace both in the Bible and in the just war tradition gives much common ground for the ecumenical dialogue on peace.

Even though there is much common ground for dialogue, it is also clear in the two documents that the Bible and the just war tradition do not lead to similar positions on every level. There is no agreement on the specific ways the Christian responsibility should be carried out on the basis of the Bible alone. Even the just war tradition does not appear to provide the grounds for similar positions, especially on deterrence. It is the task, then, of ecumenical discussion not only to discover these common lines of thought but also to explore their differences. This means we must be especially willing to show in exactly which ways our grounds lead to our particular positions and to recognize grounds we use that fall outside a common resource.

Although both documents offer insights for a theology of peace when examined individually, the evaluation of their similar and diverse lines of thought provides especially rich resources for a theology of peace. Our brief evaluation of the two documents shows that peace with justice is clearly God's will and that Christians are to respond to God's will by encouraging serious reflection on peace within the churches and in the broader society. The study of various ecclesiastical statements on peace is one significant and fruitful way to deepen this reflection.



## NOTES

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- 2 CP, p. 3
- 3 United Methodist Council of Bishops, *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*, Nashville: Graded Press, 1986, p. 11 (hereafter DC)
- 4 CP, p. 2
- 5 DC, p. 11
- 6 DC, p. 37
- 7 Philip Murnion (ed.), *The Catholics and Nuclear War*, New York: Crossroad, 1983, p. 49
- 8 DC, p. 10
- 9 CP, p. 9
- 10 CP, pp. 9-10
- 11 CP, pp. 14-18
- 12 DC, p. 26
- 13 DC, p. 35
- 14 CP, p. 23
- 15 CP, p. 24
- 16 CP, p. 37
- 17 CP, p. 18
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- 19 CP, p. 18
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- 21 CP, pp. 24, 26
- 22 CP, pp. 25-26
- 23 CP, pp. 43, 59
- 24 CP, p. 45
- 25 CP, p. 57
- 26 CP, p. 33
- 27 CP, p. 48
- 28 CP, pp. 50, 56
- 29 CP, pp. 49-50
- 30 CP, p. 50
- 31 DC, p. 13, 34
- 32 DC, p. 34
- 33 DC, p. 14
- 34 CP, p. vi
- 35 CP, p. iv
- 36 DC, p. 48
- 37 CP, p. 48
- 38 CP, p. 49
- 39 CP, p. 55
- 40 CP, p. 57
- 41 CP, pp. 59-60
- 42 DC, pp. 33, 52
- 43 DC, p. 52
- 44 DC, pp. 47, 52
- 45 DC, pp. 15, 69
- 46 DC, p. 52



- 47 DC, p. 53
- 48 DC, p. 59
- 49 DC, p. 60
- 50 DC, pp. 69-73
- 51 DC, pp. 26, 35
- 52 DC, p. 13
- 53 DC, p. 46
- 54 DC, pp. 36-37
- 55 DC, pp. 14, 46
- 56 DC, pp. 57-59
- 57 DC, p. 57
- 58 DC, p. 59
- 59 DC, pp. 14, 48
- 60 DC, p. 60
- 61 DC, pp. 16, 60-61

# THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

*Athanasios Basdehis*

## I. Preliminary remarks

The Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, meeting in the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Geneva, from October 28 to November 6, 1986, adopted four statements of ecumenical importance. They included a statement on "The Contribution of the Orthodox Churches to the Achievement of Peace, Justice, Freedom, Fraternity and Love among the Nations and the Elimination of Discrimination on the Basis of Race or on Other Grounds." This document is a draft proposal made by the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference to the future Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church. The text is a revised version of a submission on the same theme prepared by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission for the Pan-Orthodox Council in February 1986. Since it is only a draft proposal, this text, like all others produced by the Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conferences, has no binding force but is simply a recommendation on which the Council itself will decide. The texts of the Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference nevertheless reflect the unanimous view of all the autocephalous Orthodox churches today on the theme treated. As such they do not claim the authority and binding force of the decisions and recommendations of a Council.

The significance of our text lies mainly in the fact that, in it, for the first time, all the Orthodox national churches, living under different social regimes and ideologies, succeeded in agreeing on a text of this nature. The problems involved here become quite clear if we compare the text of the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference with that of the Inter-Orthodox



Preparatory Commission of February 1986. (The latter text was published in the German epd-dokumentation no. 27/86.) Our text shows that an Orthodox consensus on this theme is quite possible among the churches of the eastern block and those of the western world. As far as the language of the text as a whole is concerned, it is obvious that the terminology and style of the Russian Orthodox Church has largely been adopted. But this in no way detracts from the value of the text.

The portmanteau title of the document represents a full program and includes all the questions needing discussion if a concordant fellowship of human beings is to be achieved. The document of Pan-Orthodoxy to be analyzed here can therefore be regarded as also a clear indication of the global responsibility of orthodoxy. The vision of the Orthodox Church as exclusively mystical and spiritualized and remote from the realities of this world is an invention of isolated individuals (especially in western portraits) who not only fail to see the orthodox church in all its dimensions but also hamper others from doing so. Mysticism and spirituality obviously have an established place in the Orthodox church yet it nonetheless also recognizes the problems of humanity in its concrete reality here and now, even if it has not and still does not always get everything right. In the preface to this document, which consists of eight chapters, it is stressed that Orthodoxy is fully aware of the burning contemporary problems of humanity and has also for precisely this reason included this theme on the agenda of the Pan-Orthodox Council without thereby meaning to suggest that the Orthodox Church alone thinks of these questions. It is also stated in the preface that the problem involved is one which "concerns all Christians and all religions and in its different forms and nuances reflects the problem common to humanity as a whole." To begin with, the anthropological basis is dealt with, and indeed the theme.

## **II. Structure and material emphases of the text**

### **1. Approach based on creation theology and ontology**

Despite its relative brevity, section III - "Mission and Task of

Orthodoxy in Today's World" - is in my view to be regarded as the basis and starting point for the text as a whole: Justice, peace, freedom and love among human beings are essential contents of the Christian faith which the church has to proclaim and defend in relation to humanity and the world. The Orthodox Church assumes from the outset here a vision of humanity and the world based on the theology of creation and proposes as axiom that the human race and the whole of creation, i.e., the entire cosmos, constitute an ontological unity. The source and in this sense also the task of peace, freedom, justice and the integrity of creation lie, therefore, in leading humanity and the world back to the original order and the divine creation, to the summing up (recapitulatio) of all things in Christ and to the integration of all humanity and the world in Christ (Eph. 1:10 and Gal. 3:28). This ontological unity is rooted in the Holy Trinity which is its model and pattern. "The unity of the human race and the world springs from a fellowship of persons after the pattern of the unity of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity."

## **2. The dignity of the human person as foundation for peace - theological anthropology**

In accordance with this vision, based on the doctrine of the Trinity and the theology of creation, the central point of the entire document is the idea of the inviolable dignity, stature, wonder, holiness and divinity of the human person; it is this idea which is to be emphasized as, moreover, a *conditio sine qua non* for peace, justice and the integrity of creation. For the Orthodox Church, the idea of the absolute worth and dignity of the human person, the human being made in the likeness and image of God is "the ontological basis" of Christian anthropology. "Humanity, apex and recapitulation of the divine creation and created in the image and likeness of God, has always been for the Orthodox Church the real object of its mission in the world and in salvation history." The restoration of humanity to its original grandeur and beauty - this is another way of defining the nature and content of the church's mission in the world.



According to this basic theological and biblical vision, therefore, to establish and preserve peace means to work for the restoration of relationships between God and humanity, the restoration of the fractured world and its order to their original integrity as enjoyed prior to humanity's fall into sin. In the Orthodox view, therefore, the biblical concept of peace is not a neutral or negative approach which simply equates peace with the absence of war. The Christian and biblical concept of peace is much more inclusive and profound since its primary meaning is "the restoration of relationships, of peace, between God and humanity" (I,1), a humanity created by God in his own likeness. The center and goal of Orthodox theology is humanity - "the preservation of the authenticity and plenitude of Christian teaching about humanity and its salvation" (I,2). Humanity is not viewed individualistically and egocentrically, as isolated and solitary, but on the contrary as a social being and as a totality, as the human family, as the human race.

Humanity is not at liberty to turn its back on God its maker and imagine it can achieve everything, including peace, on its own without God. No autonomizing of humanity is possible. It is on this basic foundation that the work and cooperation of all Christians with the object of defending the dignity of the human person and achieving peace must rest.

But this cooperation cannot and should not be limited to Christians only (I,4). "The common acceptance of the supreme dignity of the human person" is named (I,5) as condition for extensive cooperation also with people of other faiths in the quest for peace.

### **3. Peace in freedom**

In section II, the idea of the dignity of the human person is further unfolded, this time from the angle of freedom. The freedom of the human person is a divine gift. Each human being is, on the one hand, a bearer of the image of the personal God, i.e., an

essentially independent person with the freedom to choose between good and evil and, on the other hand, is designed for community as exemplified in the life of communion of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

The document moves in an area of fundamental principles of Christian theology. The human being as an individual person and the solidarity of human beings have their source, their prototype and pattern, in the existence and life of the Triune God.

Humanity is also endowed with the gift of freedom which is both a supreme and irreplaceable gift of God and at the same time contains a supreme risk for the human being who acts in freedom. By it, humanity can bring its perfecting closer but at the same time can be tempted, led astray and blinded by the brilliance of this freedom, set itself in opposition to the Giver of this freedom, claim complete autonomy and finally fall. This fall, moreover, is one with which we are all too familiar! According to the document, the consequences of the abuse of this freedom today are: "The divine gift of freedom is the perfection of the human person; this is so because the individual incorporates the image of a personal God on the one hand and because a personal community, based on the unity of the human race, reflects the life of the Holy Trinity and the community of the three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. This gift of freedom enables human beings to reach awareness and to choose between good and evil (cf. Gen. 2:16-17). Thus freedom is a divine gift to human beings that makes it possible for them to move continually towards spiritual perfection. At the same time, it contains the risk of disobedience, of autonomous self-determination vis-à-vis God and hence the risk of defection. This is why evil plays such a frightening role within human beings and in the world" (II.1).

Freedom, then is a decisive category for the completion of the human person. It is maintained in the measure in which "the human being decides" to be free but "not independent of its Creator but in voluntary subjection to Him and to the plan He has determined for it." When this is not the case, when freedom



becomes disobedience, then not the good but evil and disorder gain the upper hand in the world, and the consequences of this are visible in the countless and diverse negative phenomena in the world today (II,1, p. 3).

These consequences have not fallen automatically from heaven nor are they an inevitable result of the sins of previous generations; they are the result of the sins of contemporaries, for we are all of us sinners and bear personal responsibility for what we think and do. It is very important that the consequences of human sin are seen in the contemporary context and that Orthodox theology takes note of and tackles the concrete problems of contemporary men and women. When it considers each epoch with its distinctive problems and trends, it does so because the concrete problems of each epoch can only be tackled and perhaps solved by the church if it refuses to take refuge in the anonymity and irresponsibility of structural sin.

At this Pan-Orthodox Conference, however, the representatives of the Orthodox churches were not pessimistic. Precisely in this unhappy situation of humanity today they see clear signs of a dawning awareness of the seriousness of the situation and of the presence of seeds of humanity's ontological unity, since just as the human race was bound to the Creator in the first Adam, so too is it preserved in unity with the Father God by the second Adam (Christ) (II,1).

#### 4. Peace in justice

According to the argument so far, the Christian view of peace is not only more than a mere repudiation and absence of war but also "deeper and truer than the peace which the world promises." "Peace I leave with you. My peace give I unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you" (Jn. 14:27; cf. Eph. 2:17; 6:15; Col. 1:20; Phil. 4:7).

Since, however, the freedom of the human person is an essential factor in the fulfillment of humanity's destined purpose, and freedom here means the differentiation between good and evil,

the gift of peace itself also "depends on human cooperation."  
"The divine gift of peace becomes reality where Christians strive for faith, love and hope in Jesus Christ our Lord" (cf. 1 Th. 1:3).

It is wrong to imagine, however, that the achievement of this peace is exclusively God's, without our cooperation. "The Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts when the human heart is lifted up to God and human beings penitently seek God's justice" (IV,4). For the absence of genuine peace is also connected with human wrongdoing, i.e., with sin (IV,5). Aid is therefore given to everything connected with the achievement of peace, and not only the outward and visible consequences of unrest, conflicts and war but also their inner causes must be eliminated.

Consistently with this, the Orthodox Church approves all initiatives for peace, for justice and love, among all the children of the one Father in heaven and among all the nations of the one human family. On the other hand, the Orthodox Church suffers along with all Christians who in many countries lack this gift of peace and are even persecuted for their faith (IV,6).

In striving for this peace of Christ, therefore, the outward peace of the world is also achieved. Moreover, in opposing this peace of the world, i.e., as people resist it, so too the peace of Christ is absent. The good then yields to evil and sin as a spiritual sickness. In the Orthodox view, therefore, the phenomenon of an essentially and inwardly disturbed order and relationship between God and humanity (unrest, conflicts, wars, injustice, etc.) are simply tragic consequences and outward symptoms of sin. The primary need, therefore, is to attack and cure the real cause, i.e., sin, and not simply the symptoms.

##### **5. Peace - justice - human equality**

In respect of our theme, the text lays special emphasis on two imperatives rooted in the already mentioned ontological and Trinitarian unity of the human race and the world, implicit in the theology of creation: namely, justice and human equality before God and at the human level.



"The Lord, the King of peace, disapproves of violence and injustice and condemns inhuman attitudes towards our fellow human beings" (Mt. 25:41-46; Jas. 2:15-16). The Christian faith quite clearly rules out nationalistic hatred, hostility and intolerance of any kind. God "made of one single human being the whole human race to dwell on the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26) so that "there is no longer Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, but you are all one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28).

According to this faith, therefore, racial discrimination in any form is to be rejected "since racial separation always presupposes an unequal evaluation of human races (and persons) and different rights." In the Christian view, therefore, it is "blasphemous" to assert that religious, linguistic, ethnic, racial and other differences justify discriminatory treatment of human beings on the ground that these differences are willed by God. "Orthodoxy confesses that every person, irrespective of his or her color, creed, race, or tongue, bears the image of God and is our brother or sister, an equal member of the one human family." Consistently with this, therefore, the Orthodox Church "uncompromisingly condemns" the inhuman system of apartheid.

#### **6. Service as witness of love - peace as solidarity and practical Christianity**

According to the Orthodox view, the picture presented by the world today is one marked by a critical identity crisis which can be traced back to two causes:

- a) an irresponsible use and distribution of the earth's material resources which violates not only God's image in every human being but also God himself;
- b) the consequences which flow from this, namely, the hunger and poverty in the world which threaten not only the divine gift of life of whole nations but also the honor, dignity and holiness of the human person as such.

It is necessary, therefore, to combat this world identity crisis and to champion brotherhood and solidarity among the peoples and to oppose hunger and poverty, luxury and waste of material goods. "God's will engages us to serve our fellow human beings and to come to grips with their problems."

Our witness in and for the world must always be, therefore, a witness of love and service, or, more precisely, of love in service, in other words, a practical and concrete testimony of service and not just an abstract ideology and theory (see especially VIII,2, p. 9).

It is at this precise point that the Orthodox churches confront the divided world with the ideal of the liturgical and eucharistic community as an essential element of their ecclesiology and social teaching (VII,1). The necessary consequence of this is the church's central responsibility to struggle against the hunger and the abysmal poverty which plague so many human beings and even entire nations, especially in the Third World.

The basic arguments, therefore, are not content simply to remain at the level of outward symptoms but they dig down to the root and source of the problem. Humanity and the contemporary world lose their own identity; they offend both humanity itself and God its Creator. What more serious crisis can there be than to lose one's own identity?

The consequences for Christians are correspondingly categorical and uncompromising. The document states: "In face of the terrible hunger which afflicts whole nations today, any passivity or indifference on the part of individual Christians or whole churches is equivalent to a betrayal of Christ and a lack of active faith.... For the Orthodox churches, therefore, it is an extremely important task that they should demonstrate their solidarity with their poor brothers and sisters and organize effective help for them" (VII,3). Time presses therefore. The Orthodox, who have their own experiences in this respect, are summoned to do more for their brothers and sisters in God. These brothers and sisters



are in fact the poor and the hungry, in the ~~Third~~ World especially, irrespective of whether they are members of the same confession or not. Help is ~~urgently~~ needed, and not from the Orthodox only, the document insists, but in close cooperation with the other churches and confessions, with the WCC and other international bodies which are committed to the work of combating this terrible plague. Disarmament would not only mean the end of the threat of nuclear war but also the release of considerable funds for alleviating the lot of the hungry and the poor (VII, 3).

We must realize that the hunger which plagues humanity today along with huge inequalities pronounce in our own eyes as well as in those of the just God a severe condemnation on us and our times. For God's will, the goal of which even today is the well-being of the concrete human being here and now, lays upon us the obligation to serve humanity and to wrestle directly with its concrete problems. Divorced from the mission of service, faith in Christ is meaningless. Being a Christian means following Christ and being ready to serve Him in the weak, the hungry, the oppressed and all in need of any kind. Every other attempt to affirm Christ's real presence in our midst while not seeking Him in the human being who needs our help is empty ideology (VII,4).

It is in this chapter particularly that the view of dogma and faith in Christ emerges most clearly. There is no theological theory, no abstract and therefore in the final analysis innocuous doctrine. Faith in Christ commits us to action. Faith does not mean a flight from the world, a onesided mysticism with incense, icons and candles. The past and present sufferings of the Orthodox churches often constituted and still constitute today their existential background and the source of their outlook and action, the real basis of their life throughout the centuries.

Against this existential background, the Orthodox Church today is able to see "the theology of liberation" basically as the post factum theological and theoretical development of its own

centuries-old practice. The "liberation theology" of the Orthodox Church has not been written only in ink.

### **7. Peace as the repudiation of war**

The text was adopted at a time when East-West relations and negotiations on armaments, disarmament and nuclear arms limitation had reached a certain climax. What it has to say on "peace as the repudiation of war" is certainly fundamental but is understood at the same time as an Orthodox contribution to the current discussion on nuclear arms reduction. Consistently with the preceding affirmations "Orthodoxy condemns war in principle and regards it as a consequence of evil and sin in the world." This condemnation applies to every form of armament and to every form of war, whether conventional or nuclear, whether waged on earth or in outer space (SDI). The text emphasizes particularly the consequences of a nuclear war which could lead to the complete destruction of nature and creation. "From an ecological as well as from an ethical standpoint, nuclear war is in every respect inadmissible; it is a crime against humanity and a mortal sin against God whose work it destroys." On the contrary, the peaceful use of outer space is not contrary to the will of God.

In contrast to the condemnation of war in principle - or at least problematic because no further justification of it is offered - stands the statement that Orthodoxy "permits war only as a concession and only if its purpose is the restoration of violated justice and freedom."

### **III. Summary**

A permanent struggle to maintain peace, within the church as well as in society, is characteristic of the history of the Orthodox Church seen as a whole. Foreign rule, especially in the area of Greek-speaking Orthodoxy, and the existence of political and ideological systems in the whole of the Balkan area, have compelled the Orthodox Church in the past and still compel it today to bear constant witness to peace, justice and freedom. The motive in its



efforts for peace here has not been any ambition to be political or to lay down a policy of peace. That is the essential task of politicians and statesmen. Its motive has been, rather, to proclaim God's peace in the world on the basis of the principles of the gospel and the Christian faith.

In the view of the Orthodox Church, the sure foundation for peace is respect for the dignity of the human person. Presupposing this basic principle, the biblical concept of peace is not, in our view, to be equated with a neutral and negative view which equates peace simply with the absence of war. On the contrary, as proclaimed by the Bible, peace is the restoration of relationships of peace between God and humanity.

As climax and epitome of the divine creation, humanity is for the Orthodox Church the sum total of its mission in the world and in the history of salvation. Anyone who reflects on peace in the world must have in view the restoration of relationships between God and humanity and the restoration of humanity in its original splendor and beauty. This Christian doctrine of the holiness of the human race, therefore, is the inexhaustible spring of all Christian efforts to defend the dignity and wonder of the human person.

If our point of departure is the dignity of the human person as the basic principle of all Christian and ethical action for peace, we must also concentrate on respect for human freedom which itself is also a divine gift, a gift which completes human dignity. The exponent of the divine gift of freedom here is not only the individual human being but also every human community. By this gift of freedom the human being becomes self-conscious and at the same time acquires the possibility of choosing between good and evil. For the human being, therefore, freedom is a divine gift which makes it possible for him or her to advance unceasingly towards spiritual perfection. But it includes at the same time the danger of disobedience, the temptation to autonomous self-determination over and against God and therefore the danger

of rebellion against God. To protect this God-given freedom of humanity must likewise be a central task of the church. Whenever the dignity and freedom of the human being are questioned and violated, evil with all its consequences intrudes into the world.

Faced with this situation, therefore, which is characteristic of our world and time, the main duty of the church and Christians is to emphasize in preaching, in theology, in worship and in pastoral work, the person of the human being as subject. The question of peace is, in this sense, a most important anthropological question, since it presupposes the dignity and freedom bestowed on humanity by its Creator. This freedom is preserved to the extent that the human being decides to be free not independently of the Creator but in a free and conscious decision to submit to him and to the plan he has prepared.

The church's efforts for peace must go hand in hand with its efforts for social justice, freedom, equality and love among the nations. "The gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15) which Jesus preached to "the far-off and to the near" (Eph. 2:17) is concerned with a peace which is definitely more substantial and inclusive than the peace proclaimed by the world.

Another indispensable component which must accompany all efforts for peace is the Christian view of peace with justice. "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (Ps. 85:10). Because God, the "King of righteousness," is just and compassionate, disapproving and condemning all forms of injustice and violence, there can be no legitimate place in the Christian life for injustice, violence and hatred. "Blessed are the non-violent for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Mt. 5:5-6).

The same applies to the question of differences of race and racial discrimination in all forms. Because, according to the apostle Paul, there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, Christians cannot accept racial discrimina-



tions of any kind which imply that different races are different in value and which validate and practice a suppression of human rights.

The witness and contribution of the church for peace and justice can only take the form of a witness of loving service to the fellow human being. Peace cannot be achieved in the world as long as respect for the dignity and freedom of the human person is trampled under foot. Efforts for peace are lacking in credibility, however, and will remain empty verbiage as long as they exclude justice (social, economic and political), the respect for human rights and freedom, and solidarity among the nations and peoples.

Because the Orthodox Church affirms in this radical way the principles of the Christian faith in respect of peace and justice, it accordingly condemns every form of war and armament - whether conventional, nuclear or even "star wars" - by whatever side they may be supported.

*Translated from the German by David Lewis*

# THE REJECTION OF THE SPIRIT, LOGIC AND PRACTICE OF THE SYSTEM OF DETERRENCE AS A CONTRIBUTION TO A THEOLOGY OF JUST PEACE

*Helmut Zeddies*

It is not five years since the Synod of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic first expressed the view that "a clear rejection of the spirit and logic of deterrence is inescapable"<sup>1</sup>. In 1983, this rejection became an accomplished fact, "in obedience to Christ", as the Synod stated explicitly.<sup>2</sup> A year later it was confirmed and at the same time expanded. Now it was not only the spirit and logic of deterrence but also its practice that was rejected.<sup>3</sup> This was once again explicitly confirmed in 1985.<sup>4</sup> In respect both of its course and its substance, this was an unusual cprocess and for this very reason one which provokes further questions. In a first section, therefore, I propose to try to explain how this rejection of deterrence came about and what it signifies, while the second section will examine the theological implications of this rejection.

## **I. The significance of the rejection of deterrence**

### **1. The limits of the system of deterrence**

As a result of the recently signed treaty on the dismantling and destruction of medium-range missiles, peace has become a little more secure for humanity. Despite its far-reaching significance, however, the treaty between the USA and the USSR still represents no more than a first step. There may be fewer weapons but there is still a disproportionate destructive capacity. The doctrine



of deterrence has not thereby been laid to rest. At a pinch, it has been modified, though not even this seems to me absolutely certain.

But peace is no longer to be guaranteed by the threat of military force. The recognition of this fact is the real basis for the rejection of deterrence as declared by the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic. Where it existed at all, defense policy here rested on the assumption that deterrence was the best protection against any conceivable threat from outside. The principle of deterrence thus demands a military force sufficient to destroy any potential aggressor. Necessarily fearing his own destruction, a potential aggressor will consider it advisable to refrain from such aggression. This is undoubtedly a persuasive doctrine, one moreover which has again and again stood the test in the history of the nations so far. To abandon the principle of deterrence means no more and no less, therefore, than shaking ourselves free from a very plausible tradition of long standing.

By the steady perfectioning of the system of deterrence, the latter has itself helped to hasten the recognition that the abandonment of this system has become inescapable. Since the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons of mass destruction have become themselves the mainstay of this recognition. Multinational military alliances have replaced national provisions for security. As a result, weapons have been piled up to a quite unprecedented degree and with a scarcely imaginable destructive potential. Thus, in the effort to achieve greater security, the overall threat to humanity has increased. Paradoxically, we have less, not more security, the more effectively the system of deterrence appears to function.

At first, it was this mutual threat of a nuclear counterstroke which permitted the assumption that the potential aggressor, fearing destruction by the devastating "second strike", would not even take the risk of the "first blow" in a surprise attack. Deterrence depends on the possession of nuclear weapons whose

employment must be reckoned with but which in the interests of the survival of all concerned must never be used. For "whoever crosses the nuclear threshold risks a nuclear inferno".<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, however, the two superpowers have acquired launching rockets for nuclear weapons with an even greater destructive capacity in virtue of the target precision and the possibility of using multiple warheads. An aggressor would thus be able to wipe out the enemy's entire "second strike" capacity with a single "first strike". There is also the factor of automatic technical programming of military responses. If an ostensible attack should turn out to be an error due to technical defect or human failure, correction is no longer a real possibility. A nuclear war "due to error" is now no less to be feared than one begun deliberately.

Deterrence has thus become not simply more complete but also more risky. Indeed, because of nuclear weapons of mass destruction, it has been rendered useless as a viable concept for securing peace. The doctrine of deterrence has become, on the contrary, the principal instigator of the quest for first-strike weapons, of strategies based on the first nuclear strike, and of the absence of any political means of controlling accumulated nuclear arsenals. The principle of deterrence has made the war it was actually intended to prevent more probable. It has given the world not more but less security. For a few decades it has permitted humanity to believe it would be able "to live with the bomb" but now the concept of deterrence is being destroyed by the very consequences it has itself engendered.

What should really have made us question the notion of deterrence right from the very start is the fact that it rests on fear of the possible aggressor. "The idea that peace is attainable by deterrence is only another way of saying that our quest for security must be based on fear" - as Olof Palme told the World Christian Conference for "Life and Peace" in Uppsala in 1983. Fear engenders the threat which is then met by counterthreats. The logical



consequence of this automatism is a constant series of fresh defensive efforts. It turns talk of military equality as a basis for peaceful coexistence into a purely theoretical notion. In actual fact, the quest for equality here only leads to the justification of further defensive measures, for this obviously encourages the drive for superiority rather than arms limitation.

In such conditions, an intelligent peace policy cannot prosper. Fears engendered by intimidation beget countermeasures of deterrence and foster an almost invincible distrust which hinders agreement and poisons the political atmosphere. To quote Olof Palme once more, deterrence, "far from preventing, has actually created the conditions in which political relationships inevitably deteriorated and the fear and hatred increased which - I believe - will very probably lead us into war".<sup>6</sup>

The concept of deterrence, therefore, has its own inherent limits. It can only serve to prevent a war if it can persuade a potential aggressor that he will not survive this war without provoking the use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear deterrence thus entrusts "the defense of life to a persuasive power of death".<sup>7</sup> The concept itself thereby becomes incredible. As C.F. von Weizsäcker told the LWF Assembly in Budapest, "to threaten someone with a criminal offense is only effective if we make it quite clear that we intend in the last resort to commit this criminal offense; but even so to threaten is a criminal offense."<sup>8</sup>

## **2. Common security - alternative to deterrence**

The insights we have just described led the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR to reject the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence. The Federation also realized, of course, that this could not be all there was to it. The rejection of deterrence required the proposal of an alternative way of ensuring peace and defending life. The Protestant churches in the GDR regard the concept of "common security" as such an alternative. The Federation Synod explicitly adopted this concept and did so, indeed, at the very time the rejection of the system of deterrence appeared to it to be inescapable.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of "common security" had been developed by the "Independent Commission for Disarmament and Defense" under the chairmanship of Olof Palme. Its starting point is where the weaknesses of the deterrence system have become notorious. The use of nuclear weapons secures for an aggressor military superiority because for the victim of aggression there is no effective defense. In a nuclear war there are neither victors nor vanquished. There is only a common defeat by mutual destruction. To renounce such a war must therefore be of interest to political and ideological opponents. "Only together can they survive - otherwise they will perish together" (Olof Palme).<sup>10</sup>

It is on this common interest in survival that the concept of common security is based. The two sides "must achieve security not against the adversary but together with him. International security must rest on a commitment to joint survival rather than on a threat of mutual destruction".<sup>11</sup> This is what the Palme Commission Report, published in 1982, declares. Later it states: "States can no longer seek security at each other's expense; it can be attained only through cooperative undertakings. Security in the nuclear age means common security." The common interest in survival calls for "partnership in the struggle against war itself.... A doctrine of common security must replace the present expedient of deterrence through armaments."<sup>12</sup>

This is a convincing yet quite unprecedented new approach. It takes into account the legitimate interest of states in defense and security and their responsibility for the protection of their citizens. But the need for security and the readiness for self-defense no longer have to end up with the logic of deterrence. This fatal equation is erased. The notion of security partnership replaces the rivalry which seeks to outdo the opponent in the race for security and is concerned at the same time to demonstrate to him its own superiority which is then the consequence of the confrontation of deterrence. Security partnership, on the contrary, has to recognize the other's own need for security, take his interests into account and gear its own defensive measures to them. This makes disarmament and arms-control possible.



The concept of common security must also submit to the test of political viability. The Federation Synod itself voiced the hope, therefore, that its rejection of deterrence would "create space for a policy which will gradually deliver us from the straitjacket of the system of deterrence" and "translate the concept of common security into concrete politically feasible steps".<sup>13</sup> It is the Synod's conviction that "to seek security no longer in opposition to one another but together" has become "indispensable". The important thing today, therefore, is "to discover in the friend or opponent the partner".<sup>14</sup> For "security exists only when it is shared".<sup>15</sup> The Federation Synod thereby made its own what had already been voiced by the World Conference for Life and Peace in Uppsala in 1983: "only a common security makes each and all secure".<sup>16</sup>

It becomes clear here that the concept of common security must not only be politically viable but also potentially innovative. It is a step towards establishing peace but not yet peace itself. To take this step does not mean that political and ideological conflicts automatically disappear. Security partnership is "a partnership of opponents who remain opponents even in partnership".<sup>17</sup> The differences between the social and economic systems continue to exist, but are no longer necessarily distorted into the spirit of deterrence. They are subordinated to the logic of common survival and need not end, therefore, in irrational enmity.

The natural consequence of security partnership, on the contrary, is the objectification of the conflicts. It creates a climate in which trust can grow and cooperation prosper. Enemy stereotypes and hostile rhetoric become superfluous. Indeed, they even prove damaging because they would begin again to engender intimidation and fear. Security partnership also means, of course, that the partners respect each other along with each other's self-understanding, worldview and social system. This means, in other words, respecting the partner's integrity and sovereignty and

abandoning attempts at political or economic destabilization. For the precondition for achieving common security and defense is for every state, no matter what system it favors, the consolidation internally and externally.

Security partnership, therefore, is more than a concept of disarmament policy. It can constitute the basis for a new order of peaceful common life. But it can do this only as it takes root in human thinking and behavior. Even the system of deterrence could not possibly have functioned had it not won minds and hearts. It mobilized the fear of intimidation and concentrated a self-centered security mindedness into the spirit and logic of deterrence. Only when this system has been conquered politically, but also psychologically and morally, can the concept of common security become an effective alternative principle for the maintenance of peace and the ensuring of human survival. This is why it must be potentially innovative. Without "fresh thought" it will never be translated into practice. This has considerable consequences for changes in social and even personal consciousness and in patterns of behavior. Human beings have still to discover and acquire for themselves but also in others, the capacity for peace and the hunger for peace. Education for peace becomes a really "indispensable" task. The Federation of Evangelical Churches also made this point very clearly.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. The connection between peace and justice

It is the conviction of the Federation Synod that "a system of common security based on justice" "between East and West, North and South" is the only possibility.<sup>19</sup> For, as the Synod emphasizes, peace "can only be achieved in a solidarity between peoples and governments based on justice".<sup>20</sup> Whether or not there will be peace for the world depends not only and not even mainly on disarmament and arms control. Necessary though these are, in themselves they do not ensure the survival of humanity. What is indispensable for peace is justice in sharing the goods of this earth. The goal of the efforts to achieve common security is the capacity of all to survive.



The South has good reason to suspect that what is ultimately behind the efforts for peace is only the survival of the prosperous North. Defense interests have often enough been invoked when it was really only a question of justifying political and economic predominance at the expense of the countries of the Third World. Who can really be surprised, then, if the demand for justice takes precedence over all other demands? For anyone belonging to the hundreds of millions who today starve to death, or suffer from tyranny and discrimination, the piece of bread which he/she lacks or the human rights he is denied understandably weigh more in the balance than a nuclear war which could perhaps break out in some other part of the world tomorrow.

Yet their survival depends on the prevention of a nuclear disaster. Its prevention not just in the sense that the weapons stationed in readiness for such a war are not actually used but also in the sense that they are rendered superfluous so that, in Isaiah's vision (Is. 2:4), "swords are beaten into ploughshares". For even the missiles which are produced and stationed but not used cost countless human lives. The huge financial resources they absorb are not available for the conquest of hunger and poverty, sickness and ignorance. They are urgently needed in order to pave the way for a fair access to food, technology and reserves of raw materials.

To these tasks, life-supportive in the truest sense, the prosperous nations have not done justice precisely because they devote a large portion of their wealth to protecting themselves from mutual fear by military deterrence. If the vast resources now lavished on armaments were used instead in the struggle against starvation and poverty, then, in Olof Palme's words, a greater number of human lives could thereby be saved than have ever been saved by military defense. When Palme told the Christian World Conference on Life and Peace this in Uppsala in 1983, he concluded his address by referring to the words of Pope Paul VI: "Justice is the new name for peace".

No peace strategy, not even that of collective security, therefore, can be limited by the removal of the nuclear threat in the East-West conflict. Otherwise it would actually perpetuate the absence of peace due to structural injustice. The Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches performed a great service by showing clearly and explicitly the indissoluble connection between peace and justice and thereby also helping to shape the attitude of the Protestant churches in the GDR. "The ecumenical approach to peace and justice", the Assembly declared, "is based on the belief that without justice for all everywhere we shall never have peace anywhere."<sup>21</sup> The Budapest Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation picked this up when it declared that "[t]here can be no lasting peace as long as ... injustices prevail", for "there is no peace without justice, and no justice without peace."<sup>22</sup>

## **II. Theological aspects of the rejection of deterrence**

### **1. The rejection of deterrence - a theological challenge**

When churches in different countries, out of a sense of responsibility for peace, have come out in favor of ending the system of deterrence and inaugurating the principle of common security, this has usually been regarded at first as pure utopianism and political naivete. Meanwhile, however, the view has gained ground among leading politicians, not least those of the two superpowers, that this is probably the only available option if there is to be any permanent guarantee for the survival of humanity. This is even reflected, remarkably enough, in the discussion paper published by the representatives of such diverse political parties as the SED in the GDR and the SPD in the Federal Republic on "The conflict of Ideologies and common security" which aroused great interest not least in the GDR. The very title of this paper demonstrates the progress made by the notion of "common security".



What the churches have had to say has proved, therefore, politically viable; it may even have contributed to a changed political outlook. This influence can be noted soberly or even with a certain quiet satisfaction. But it would still not be enough if it remained uncertain whether and in what way the churches' rejection of the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence is theologically justified. How far this rejection of deterrence can really be assessed, must, therefore, be judged by quite different criteria. It needs to be tested by criteria recognized by the churches themselves as binding on the basis of their origin and mission.

The Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR realized this from the outset. When the rejection of the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence was first mooted, it was clear that this raised basic theological questions. By its "Statement on Peace and Justice", the Vancouver Assembly of the WCC obviously encouraged the Federation Synod actually to go public with a repudiation of deterrence which at first was only under consideration. The Synod thus responded to the challenge of the Vancouver Assembly and in the Assembly's own words: "[T]he production and deployment of nuclear weapons as well as their use constitute a crime against humanity and that such activities must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds."<sup>23</sup>

What these "grounds" are remains, of course, unspecified. Neither the Vancouver Assembly nor the Federation Synod defined them. The Vancouver Assembly emphasized that the "nuclear weapons issue is ... a question of Christian discipline and faithfulness to the Gospel".<sup>24</sup> A similar statement is also found in the Federation Synod's declaration. But while this made the motivation behind the rejection clear, no real theological rationale had yet been provided for this stance. The Federation Synod was also well aware of this. It left no room for doubt that it had voiced its repudiation of the system of deterrence "in obedience to Christ" but at the same time it also declared: "We are still not clear as to all the consequences this (decision) will have for

us."<sup>25</sup> This admission certainly also reflects the obvious uncertainty still existing in respect of the theological implications of the rejection of deterrence. This rejection (as it seems to me at any rate) is not the fruit of prior theological study but rather the other way round. Once the rejection had been voiced, the need for a fuller theological explanation and certainty was felt.

In recent years the concern to meet this need has also influenced to a large extent the Federation's work on the theology of peace. This can be ascertained (again I am expressing my personal point of view) at two points in particular. First, the stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the resultant threat to all life has been seen as a challenge to faith. If this threat is "tacitly accepted", declared the Federation, "we come into conflict with God the Creator, for his command commits us to the defense of creation and excludes any right to destroy it. The choice confronting us here, therefore, is between the obedience and disobedience to God himself."<sup>26</sup>

The conflict has led, e.g., to the question whether Christians are permitted to join in terrorizing other human beings with weapons "which actually make the disaster they are supposed to prevent more probable". Or should Christians not already oppose even preparations for self-defense employing nuclear weapons "if it is certain, as it surely is, that this defense irrevocably destroys what it is supposed to defend"?<sup>27</sup>

Strikingly enough, the second approach of theological reflection is also shaped by the question of Christian obedience, but now from a christological standpoint. If Christ himself is our peace and if Christians know that it is from him that they receive the gift of peace, then here is the basis for their mission of witness to and service of peace. This mission obliges them not only to reject the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence but also, in cooperation with others, to seek a rational alternative in order that humanity may survive.<sup>28</sup>

Here, therefore, the responsibility of Christians for peace not only has its partner: namely, Christ himself. From start to finish,



it is to Him they owe obedience, an obedience which must become committed and concrete in their words and their deeds. What they are to do or to refrain from doing, including their decisions in the political realm, as for example in the question of the use or even merely the production or deployment of weapons of mass destruction or again in the question of military service as such, thus becomes a question of obedience to Christ. It is certainly no accident that our thoughts turn spontaneously here to the 2nd Thesis of the Barmen Theological Declaration. This Thesis bears witness to Jesus Christ as God's declaration of the forgiveness of all our sins and, at the same time, as God's mighty claim upon our whole life. It therefore rejects the view "that there are areas of our life in which we belong not to Jesus Christ but to other masters ...". This reference to the Barmen Theological Declaration also pinpoints, of course, the difficult problems involved here to which we shall have occasion to return.

## 2. The threat to peace as a status confessionis?

The quest for theological direction in the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR in the following years concentrated more and more on the confession of faith aspect. Any surprise at this can only be momentary. Scarcely any other focus seemed as suitable as this for combining the two aspects of Christian obedience (discipleship of Christ, the Prince of Peace, and the defense of the creation), namely, the idea that, from a theological standpoint, the rejection of the system of deterrence represents a confession of the faith in contemporary terms related to the actual situations today. In face of the continued pile up of weapons, some in any case already consider the status confessionis (a case of confession) as existing. The declaration of the Dar es Salaam Assembly of the LWF (1977) that the system of apartheid in South Africa constituted a status confessionis and similar statements of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches contributed their influence, too, to the discussion of disarmament and peace.

This prompted a study of the use made of the term "status confessionis" in the debate on peace.<sup>29</sup> The Theological Commission set up by the Federation to examine this question came to the conclusion that the term should not be used in this context. When it is a question of championing the cause of peace in positive and negative declarations in a responsible witness to the gospel, the term "status confessionis" seems to the Theological Commission not to be the appropriate one, for a number of reasons. In adopting this view, it clearly marks its distance from the view of the Moderamen of the German Reformed Alliance as expressed in its 1982 declaration: "The question of peace is a confessional issue. For us the status confessionis is given with it because the attitude taken to means of mass destruction has to do with the affirmation or denial of the gospel itself."<sup>30</sup> Hence the rejection not only of the possible use of such weapons but even their production and deployment.

But even for the Theological Commission, the matter itself was by no means settled by its cautious statement concerning the use of the term "status confessionis". On the contrary, it emphasized the challenge confronting the Christian church, namely, "in the face of the threat to our world, to bear witness clearly and unitedly to the purpose of peace of God the Creator, Reconciler and Renewer".<sup>31</sup> It would recognize a witness of this kind as an act of confession. For "confessing the faith is an expression of a lived faith. This can take various forms. One such form ... is giving an account of the faith publicly and in the name of the church." What is to be said on the basis of faith, in face of the threatened annihilation of humanity, to ensure its survival and the integrity of creation by a peace with justice, could be one such "public account of the faith as a doctrine binding on the church".<sup>32</sup> Precisely because the threats in question are global, it is reasonable to argue that confessional declarations are scarcely conceivable if they are not at the same time ecumenical declarations in the sense that they grow out of an ecumenical context and are supported by the ecumenical fellowship of churches. What we are to envisage here is the sort of conciliar process for peace, justice and the integrity of creation which has meanwhile



gripped the imagination of the churches of the world. Contemporary confession would also have to be understood, therefore, not as a single once-and-for-all act or as a definitive theological verdict but specifically as a process in which insights mature, different ecclesiastical and theological traditions are given due weight and consensus becomes possible for the maximum number.

### 3. Towards the confession of the faith

The further theological study desired by the Federation Synod did in fact take this direction, a process towards the confession of the faith, a "processus confessionis". It was no accident, therefore, that the report of the findings of further study bore the title "Our Churches on the Way to Confessing the Faith in the Question of Peace".<sup>33</sup> Systematic as this may sound, it was in fact no more than an attempt to describe an approach. Nor could it avoid admitting that it had not proved possible to reach agreement in the decisive theological question: namely whether the rejection of deterrence was to be characterized as contemporary confession of the faith and, if so, in what way?

One interpretation pursued in this connection, as to what the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence really mean met with widespread agreement in the special commission set up by the Executive of the Churches' Federation. The Synod itself had not defined this in its declaration rejecting deterrence. In order to defend it against the suspicion of empty rhetoric, it should at once be explained that by "spirit, logic and practice" here are meant different dimensions of the system of deterrence. This system is the expression of a spirit which underlies action in this system, which determines defense-strategy decisions as well as political choices and at the same time goes beyond them. By "spirit of deterrence" is meant here "basic attitudes, basic behavior patterns, dominant values, mentalities which are no longer examined and reflected on but as prejudices determine our action".<sup>34</sup> Spirit thereby becomes power which subjects even what seems quite rational politically in sub-systems to irrational pressures and compulsions.

To speak of the logic of deterrence is to describe a way of thinking for which security depends on weapons of mass destruction and which legitimizes them as a means of preventing war. This way of thinking only seems logical, of course, if it also accepts the ultimate consequences. The purpose of deterrence can only seem logical, of course, if it also accepts the ultimate consequences. The purpose of deterrence can only be made credible by an unconditional determination to employ the available weapons. The earlier strategy of "mutual assured destruction" and the more recent strategy of "flexible response", as well as the concentration on the "worst case" also belong, therefore, to the logic of deterrence. It also requires that one's own military strength should always be just that much superior to the opponent's potential threat. A balance of forces therefore remains in principle unattainable. What is thought of as a defensive doctrine can become effective, basically, only as a strategy of intimidation. At this point a deterrence conceived of in its original sense begins to become counterproductive and at the same time illogical.

Since it is necessary to suppose in the case of the opponent, too, a readiness for complete destruction, deterrence engenders over and above this the corresponding ideologies and enemy stereotypes. It determines political decisions and thereby prevents the development of alternative non-violent strategies for resolving conflicts up to and including the construction of a political order of peace. This also indicates the wider ramifications of the practice of deterrence. Once again it largely overflows the strictly military sphere by directly affecting our politics and our economy, our language and our education, our mass media and our culture.

Are we to regard the rejection of a system of deterrence so interpreted as contemporary confession of the faith? On this question, opinions are divided. For some, the rejection is an expression of the concern, in face of the mortal threat confronting humanity as a whole, to speak with special incisiveness, clarity and commitment to the actual political situation of today. For others, the



church is clear and inescapably challenged by this danger to give a concrete answer from its own basis in terms of its own mission. Its very existence as the church is at stake in the giving or the refusal of this answer. In this sense, they consider that the question of peace has become a confessional issue.

The spirit, logic and practice of deterrence, then, are no longer compatible with the confession of faith in Jesus Christ. The rejection of deterrence - its spirit, logic and practice - is understood as the inescapable consequence of precisely this confession of faith in Christ. It appears as the inescapable obverse of the promise that human beings are set free in Christ to live by the peace of God and are enlisted by him in the service of the peace of the world. The negative of the rejection of deterrence derives its force, therefore, from the positive of the peace of Jesus Christ. To reject deterrence means confessing our faith in him. But this cannot be a purely verbal act. Witness and action, word and deed, belong inseparably together. The commitment to strive for political alternatives for the maintenance of peace follows necessarily, therefore, from the confession of faith expressed in the rejection of the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence.

Anyone anxious to establish the theological character of this rejection of the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence in this way is strongly tempted to appeal here to the "abrenuntiatio diaboli". From the days of the ancient church onwards, the renunciation of "the devil and all his works" has been an integral part of the administration of baptism. The rejection of deterrence is interpreted on this basis as a concrete form of the baptismal confession of faith. Its purpose is to make plain the fact that the "spirit, logic and practice of deterrence is in complete contradiction to the spirit of christ operative in baptism and to the practice of Christian discipleship to which we are directed, and in which we are installed in baptism."<sup>35</sup>

But if the rejection of deterrence and the renunciation of the devil are connected together in this way, the final outcome is a demonizing of the system of deterrence. I consider this to be neither mandatory nor theologically warranted. To demonize deter-

rence can all too easily lead to an excited or even a fatalistic form of apocalypticism. Instead of calling a halt to it, we succumb to its pressures because to its character as menace we add the additional burden of interpreting it as diabolical. I very much doubt whether this can be reconciled with the biblical view of baptism.

According to the New Testament, anyone who has been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and therefore into his death (cf. Rom. 6:3) has thereby accomplished the decisive breakthrough beyond the demonization of the world and its life. The renunciation of the devil acquires its significance precisely here as an attestation that a change of sovereignty has taken place in baptism. But if this immediate context of the administration of baptism is dropped, it is impossible to exclude the danger of assimilating the *abrenuntiatio diaboli* with the practice of exorcism. The history of the church offers examples of such an assimilation.<sup>36</sup> These have shown that the rites accompanying baptism have not infrequently been seen as conditions for baptism or supplements to it. This inevitably raised the question whether deliverance from the powers of destruction was effected by baptism or of the rites accompanying it. These rites would in that case no longer serve to attest baptism itself but rival it as special means of salvation.

The point of these critical remarks is in no way to encourage a trivialization of the system of deterrence. It is clear to me too, that mechanisms, behavior patterns and attitudes to life are reflected in this system which have largely shaped both individuals and corporate social life. The idea of deterrence is in fact a power which strongly influences people and is, for that very reason, a force which increasingly threatens them today. In terms of social psychology, this is an influential factor and one to be exposed, therefore. When I interpret it theologically, I rediscover here the basic structure of actual human life as seen from the standpoint of God, namely, that which the Bible defines as sin. In the exposure of deterrence, we shall certainly never be able to reckon



often enough with the sinfulness of humanity; that certainly applies also to the case of its rejection! To go further than this a demonization of the system of deterrence would therefore make it appear not more dangerous but certainly more fatalistic. If we are to call a halt to deterrence, this demonization of it must certainly be rigorously avoided.

#### 4. Confessing the faith today by rejecting the system of deterrence

The Federation Synod did not permit this theological controversy to impress it unduly. It wished to round off the many years of effort by reaching a conclusion which would answer as definitively as possible the question of the meaning of the rejection already declared. At its meeting this year, the Synod approved by a large majority a document which sets out the implications of its rejection of the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence for its confession of the faith, its orientation and its action today.<sup>37</sup> I shall confine my comments here to the section on contemporary confession of the faith.

The rejection of deterrence is linked here with a threefold approach to the confession of faith in God: the confession of his love which embraces all human beings without distinction; the confession of the deliverance from bondage to fear, accomplished by God through Christ; and the confession of the justice conferred by God in Christ. In each case, there follows from the confession of faith in these three forms the repudiation of the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence, the effect of which is described in detail. This repudiation is rooted and grounded, therefore, in the confession of faith in God. It thereby assumes the character of an anathema (a rejection clause). In each case, two further statements are added: the confession of our bondage to the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence; and the prayer that God may deliver us from this bondage.

In my view, however, the structure of the text, clearly recognizable from its arrangement, is seriously impaired by the content of what is asserted. When it is a matter of describing the spirit,

logic and deterrence, the declaration has its linguistically and materially powerful and illuminating emphases. But the way in which these are connected with the strictly confessional statements shows that what the structure in itself proposes is actually not possible: namely, to be able to join in the confession of faith in the peace-making God without having to adopt the consequences deduced from this confession, to the extent that a person cannot do this. This presupposes a different degree of binding force for the confessional statements, on the one hand, and the consequences derived from them for the rejection of deterrence, on the other. For this the text, however, on the basis of its content, leaves no room. In terms of its own purpose, it wants even to prevent this.

But that being the case, it is difficult to avoid the impression that a desirable and even necessary declaration of faith in favor of a just peace has turned into a declaration of faith against deterrence. The occasion which prompts this confession of faith is the recognition of the situation of deadly danger in which humanity finds itself. But the confession of faith is also influenced by the theological analysis of this situation. Although this interpretation does not tell against such confessional utterances, it does raise the question as to whether this interpretation alone is theologically warranted or whether other interpretations are also possible theologically. This leads to the further question whether the repeated rejection of the system of deterrence could perhaps have led the Federation of Evangelical Churches into constraints of formulation and argumentation whereby theology - unintentionally, of course - becomes exposed to the danger of having to accept the role of a legitimizer after the fact. When theology succumbs to this danger, it becomes optional. It would then not only lose its credibility but also completely mistake its vocation.

In its declaration the Federation Synod points out in its declaration that the rejection of the spirit, logic and practice of deterrence has been dictated by obedience to the Triune God. It obviously assumed, therefore, that others would adopt its con-



fession of faith. There may perhaps be a connection between this and the fact that the declaration scarcely provides any indication as to how we are to strive by theological arguments to persuade others to agree with such a confession of faith.

Anyone whose thinking starts from Christian obedience will certainly not automatically consider this to be indispensable. In that case, however, it remains unexplained how the spirit of deterrence really contradicts the Holy Spirit of how we are to understand the contradictions asserted between the logic of deterrence and the work of reconciliation in Christ, between the practice of deterrence and the justice of God. A real reception of the confessional affirmations will probably be considerably hampered by this failure in theological communication.

#### **5. Confession of faith in favor of a just peace - rejection of the doctrine of the just war**

The efforts directed to Article XVI of the Augsburg Confession under the auspices of the Federation of Evangelical Churches, and here among the Lutheran churches in particular, are likewise to be seen in connection - not a causal but certainly a material connection - with the reflections on the rejection of the system of deterrence. According to this Art. XVI of the CA, "Christians may without sin ... engage in just wars, serve as soldiers ...." Even in the congregations, this statement increasingly meets with incomprehension, criticism and even outright rejection.

But how are we to get round a confessional statement which has lost its authority today while the confession itself as such continues to be binding on the churches which recognize it? This problem has produced the idea of glossing the contested text of CA XVI with an up-to-date explanation and giving it at the same time as great a measure of authority as possible. In this way it is hoped that, in face of a fundamentally changed situation from that which pertained when the CA was drafted and adopted, the confession itself and the peace witness of the churches which accept this confession of faith will remain credible. At the same

time, this procedure avoids altering or even canceling the authority of the CA as a confessional document. An exegesis of CA XVI is therefore produced which follows directly from fidelity to the confession and renews its validity in face of fresh challenges. An up-dated interpretation of this kind is not as unusual as it might appear at first sight. The Augsburg Confession itself practiced such interpretation when it saw its task as being that of an interpreter of the Holy Scripture and guide to its understanding. The apostolic witness was up-dated by the Augsburg Confession from its biblical attestation and in affirmation of the fellowship of the universal church of Christ. The contextual interpretation was here just as important to the Augsburg Confession as the demonstration of its continuity with Scripture and tradition.

The first implication of this is that we must realize afresh the basic affirmations the article as a whole is making. This includes, for example, the authentically Reformation recognition that witness to the faith requires us not to despise the world or turn our backs on it but to assume responsibility for it. In other words, there is no faith which does not lead to actions as well. Like the Reformation fathers, we too have to demonstrate this in witness and service to others in the concrete areas of earthly life in obedience to our Lord.

Another essential insight to be derived from CA XVI, in my view, is that God's purpose is to preserve his creation with the "good order" created by him. In the face of its threatened destruction, therefore, we recognize a task which is new to us, one which was perhaps too long neglected. It is not in securing recognition of the global connection between justice, peace and the integrity of creation that we must bear witness today to the divine "good order"? To this must certainly be added our recognition that in the nuclear age war can no longer be justified as a political instrument. In view of the pile-up of nuclear armaments the question can no longer be whether or when a war is justified but only how war can be prevented.



When the basic affirmations of CA XVI are adopted and up-dated in this way and at the same time combined with the insights derived from the altered situation of today, it becomes possible to envisage a contemporary exegesis of CA XVI. It would at least be worth a try. Such an exegesis would, I imagine, embrace a few maximal consensus statements descriptive of our contemporary understanding of CA XVI. Let me give a few examples, purely tentative and illustrative:

Because God's peace has entered the world in Jesus Christ, we know ourselves to be enlisted in his service as instruments of his peace. The mission entrusted to us by God commits us to the preservation of creation. Weapons of mass destruction are contrary to God's Word and command. Human beings have no right to destroy creation.

We are therefore opposed to all attempts to justify war. For God's sake and for the sake of human beings, war must be abolished.

There can be no peace in the world unless there is justice for all.

We therefore advocate the replacement of war as an instrument of politics by an order of a just peace.

For God's sake and for the sake of human beings, we are today commanded to join in the service of

As Christians, we are determined to venture steps which lead to an order of just peace.

The thoughts I have presented here concerning a binding exegesis of CA XVI are still a matter of consultations between the Federation Churches, both as regards their content and the question of procedure. I was anxious, however, to share them with you here. If the discussions produce a provisional concrete finding, I consider it axiomatic, because exegesis of CA XVI should also be presented to the Lutheran World Federation for examination.

## 6. Lessons for a theology of just peace

Let me conclude with a number of points culled from a fresh study of the documents the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR bearing on the theology of peace. They could also, perhaps, be helpful for the development of a theology of just peace.

a) Intensive study of the problems of the system of deterrence and its replacement by an acceptable alternative has made it clear that we are confronted here in the main, though not exclusively, with ethical questions. Christian witness for, and service of, peace also demand of us doctrinal decisions which not infrequently touch on decisions of theological principle, as for example, on the relationship of law and gospel, or a correctly interpreted "two kingdoms doctrine". When witness to the Christian faith is involved, it is also a question more often than not of theologically responsible action and political consequences.

b) As we have seen, the statements made by the Federation have been powerfully influenced by opposition to the system of deterrence. On the contrary, there is hardly any clear emphasis on the positive stance of a theology of peace.

This positive stance is assumed rather than really expounded. The significance of God's purpose of peace for the political defense of peace, the nature of the peace God gives in the gospel in order to preserve the world but also in order to overcome the world, the interplay between the Christian witness to peace and the Christian task of peace making - on all this, the Federation remains silent. Certainly the problems are present but they are at most only mentioned but not discussed. A theology of peace still remains to be developed by the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR.

c) On the other hand, there is increased awareness of a specific theological questions in this area. The threat overhanging humanity because of the pile-up of weapons and environmental pollution has sharpened awareness that the preservation of creation has



become a basic task for faith. It is precisely for this reason that there can no longer be any talk of a just war. The institution of war must itself be abolished, therefore, so as to make room for as equitable and as just as possible an order of peace.

d) In future, too, it will be impossible for declarations on the theology of peace to omit the summons to obedience as disciples of Christ. Otherwise these statements would be unworthy of the name. The already mentioned Second Thesis of the Barmen Theological Declaration would thereby be dismissed as irrelevant to the question of the Christian responsibility for peace. But the vital question will be whether, in a concrete case, there can only be one form of Christian obedience to Christ. If so, all others (including non Christians) must be required to take this way. If the church were then to reject this claim to obedience, its ecclesial character would be in jeopardy.

But the question whether, and if so to what extent, Christian obedience can lead to different consequences, or to consequences which are no longer really reconcilable with faith in Jesus Christ, obviously becomes once more an increasingly urgent one.

Perhaps even Jesus' parable of the two sons would have to be rewritten in terms of the acceptance or refusal of military service: the one son refuses it, the other son accepts it. And this other son would now be the prodigal!<sup>38</sup> This is meant to show that, in certain circumstances, the gospel itself is in jeopardy in the summons to the obedience of faith. The message of the justifying and liberating grace of God is, in fact, simultaneously promise and demand. This connection is inalienable. But to emphasize this must not lead us to reverse the sequence. God's address to us is gospel precisely because the promise precedes the claim, the unconditional grace of salvation precedes the claim on our obedience. We are permitted to believe in the gospel, to live and die in this faith, even when despite God's promise and gift we fail to match his claim. And can we ever assert that we have matched this claim?!

e) The efforts within the Federation in the question of the theology of peace have been focused in a striking way on the question of the question of the confession of faith. There are good grounds for this. In the light of the church's basis and mission, it continues to appear desirable to make God's peace and peace for the world the theme of our confession of faith. But confession is concerned with agreement. A confession of faith needs reception. It must aim at as broad a consensus as possible. Experiences suggest that a consensus of this kind is difficult to achieve today. The drive for confession can therefore become a one-way street and even a cul de sac. For at least the initial phase of our future efforts, it could be wise deliberately to re-discover and develop theologically, therefore, the category of "prophetic speech" as a witness born from the obedience of faith in a specific situation.

If these *are* the creative insights derivable from the work of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic for the promotion of a theology of just peace, then they would be a - certainly modest but possible helpful - contribution to that end.

*Translated from the German by David Lewis*



## NOTES

- 1 Synod decision on the Report of the Conference of Protestant Church Leaders, 28th September 1982, in the information leaflet of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR (*MBI*), Nos 5-6, 1982, p. 62
- 2 Synod decision on the Report of the Conference of Protestant Church Leaders, 19th September 1983, *MBI*, Nos 5-6, 1983, p. 79
- 3 Cf. Synod decision on the Report of the Conference of Protestant Church Leaders, 25th September 1984, *MBI*, Nos 5-6, 1985, p. 103
- 4 Cf. Synod Decision on the Report of the Conference of Protestant Leaders, 24th September 1985, *MBI*, Nos 5-6, 1985, p. 60
- 5 Joachim Garstecki, "Sicher ist nicht sicher. Alternativen zur Abschreckung", lecture to the Berlin-Brandenburg Protestant Academy, December 1983 (roneod)
- 6 Emma Rothschild, as quoted by Olof Palme at the Christian World Conference on "Life and Peace", Uppsala, 1983
- 7 Report of the Conference of Protestant Church Leaders for the Federation Synod 1983, *MBI*, Nos 5-6, 1983, p. 52
- 8 *Budapest 1984, "In Christ - Hope for the World"*, Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly, LWF Report Nos 19/20, February 1985, p. 57
- 9 Cf. Synod decision on the Report of the Conference of Protestant Church Leaders, 28th September 1982, note 1
- 10 At the Christian World Conference on "Life and Peace", Uppsala, 1983
- 11 *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*. The Report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, London and Sydney: Pan Books, 1982, p. ix

- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 139
- 13 Synod decision on the Report of the Conference of Protestant Church Leaders, 19th September 1983, note 3
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Decision on the Report of the Conference, 24th September 1985, note 4
- 16 Message of the Christian World Conference on "Life and Peace"
- 17 Joachim Garstecki, note 5
- 18 Cf. Synod decisions of 1983 and 1985, notes 2 and 4
- 19 Decision on the 1983 Conference Report, note 3
- 20 Decision on the 1985 Conference Report, note 4
- 21 "Statement on Peace and Justice", para 10, *Gathered for Life: Official Report of the VIth Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, Vancouver, 1983, ed. David Gill, p. 132
- 22 Statement on "Peace and Justice", *Budapest 1984*, note 8, p. 183
- 23 Decision on Report of 1983 Conference, note 3
- 24 Vancouver Statement on Peace and Justice, para 25, note 21, p. 137
- 25 Decision on 1983 Conference Report, note 2
- 26 Decision on 1982 Conference report, note 1
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Cf. *ibid.*
- 29 Cf. *MBI*, Nos 5-6, 1983, pp. 75ff.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 77
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 78
- 32 *Ibid.*



- 33 Report of the Ad hoc Committee on Peace Questions on the further study of the specific issue of the confession of faith in the peace issue, *MBI* 1/3 (1987), p. 12
- 34 Appendix I to the report, cf. note 33, p. 3
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 14
- 36 Cf. Edmund Schlink, *The Doctrine of Baptism*, transl. by Herbert J.A. Bouman, St. Louis & London: Concordia Publishing House, 1972, pp. 196f.
- 37 "Confessing the Faith in the Peace Issue" (in German), only in roneod form
- 38 Cf. *Glaube und Heimat*, No. 43 (1987)

# PEACE, JUSTICE AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH - AN OUTLINE

*Heinz-Günther Stobbe*

## I.

I.1. If a theology of a just peace is to be credible, it must first examine humbly and self-critically the church's own capacity for peace. This initial step is necessary, firstly, when we recall the church's own historical experiences and people's experiences of the church. To many people, these experiences make the church's claim to seek, to serve and to be capable of serving the cause of peace appear profoundly questionable and even arrogant. This challenge to the church's view of itself becomes particularly radical (i.e., going to the very roots) when it culminates in the skeptical thesis that the Christian faith is occupied by an "evil spirit" (L. Feuerbach) because it is only definable in absolute opposition to unbelief and therefore splits human society, invariably and inevitably into two hostile camps.

I.2. Apologetic theology's response to this radical objection to the Christian faith and the church must begin by demonstrating (necessarily on a dogmatic basis) that peace and justice have their root and inspiration as theological themes in the heart of faith and also form part, therefore, of the core of all faithful proclamation of the gospel. This still leaves intact the limit of every theological argument. Irrespective of logical and systematic consistency, a theological argument as such will never be able to convince people and win their assent if it is contradicted by the actual behavior of Christians and the church. In the last analysis, the credibility of faith depends to this extent not on arguments but on the testimony, i.e., on "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power".



I.3. Though orthopraxy is undoubtedly of primary importance for the credibility of the Christian faith, faith nevertheless is not as such equivalent to practice. Dogmatic theology cannot simply be defined, therefore, as a reflection of Christian practice. It would be truer to say that it reflects the faith - and Christian practice in the light of faith. To the extent that peace and justice are central elements of the Christian faith, Christian dogmatic theology can be described as a peace theology. The converse of this is that peace theology is a reflection by the Christian faith on itself.

I.4. For a peace theology, therefore, the methodical starting point and material basis is not an analysis of the social context of faith and theology but rather the experience of faith and with faith. It must at the same time be maintained, however, that both the experience of faith and experiences with faith always take place within a definite context; they are contextually conditioned and necessarily bear the imprint of their context in the forms in which they are expressed.

I.5. It follows, therefore, that the social and community setting in which the Christian peace theology has its home is not the living space of the poor, the exploited, the oppressed and the discriminated against, but the church itself as the community of faith and of believers. It remains true, nevertheless, that the church's social and communal location is primarily alongside suffering human beings, especially the victims of poverty, injustice and oppression.

## II.

II.1. The primary locus theologicus of the theology of just peace, therefore, is where faith lives and is experienced as faith and consequently where the church lives and is experienced as the church, for there it becomes visible to all (and must be made visible to all) that faith, as the response to God's call in Jesus Christ, seeks nothing other than peace and justice among human beings.

II.2. In other words, put succinctly, the theology of just peace is rooted in the experience of the Eucharist as the supreme and basic act of the church. Strictly speaking, it is materially identical with a theology of the church as a eucharistic fellowship and is so, indeed, because of what is attested and effected in the Eucharist in real symbols, i.e., sacramentally, is the indissoluble relationship between, on the one hand, the reconciliation of humanity with God which has taken place in and through Jesus Christ and, on the other hand, the reconciliation of human beings with other human beings and with nature.

II.3. In practice, therefore, to criticize the church and society radically in the name of justice and peace means viewing the church and society in the light of the eucharistic reality and vision and measuring them against the criterion made accessible there, the criterion of the created destiny of humanity and nature and their completed form, the kingdom of God.

II.4. From this, on the one hand, proto-logical and, on the other hand, eschato-logical standpoint, from which church, society and nature become visible as realities within the comprehensive context of the creation sustained by God's will of salvation, the relationship of church and society can be understood as an ecological relationship. In other words, ecclesiological reflection must take into account from the very outset the fact that neither in practice nor in theory can the life of the church be separated from its social context. For better or for worse, church history takes place as a co-evolution of church and society.

II.5. Although called forth from society by its Lord, the ecclesia nevertheless constitutes a predestined unity with society and every pastoral policy which concentrates exclusively on ensuring the church's survival and views society as no more than a mission field comes to grief on this fact. In other words, if injustice and strife prevail in society, then the life of the church in the long run comes to share in society's suffering if it fails to actively resist both injustice and strife by bearing witness to the just and peacemaking God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Since in such a case the church, though acting politically, nevertheless does nothing alien to its nature but simply attests its faith, it may be said in respect of certain critical situations that the martyrs of the faith die at one and the same time for both the church and society.

### III.

III.1. The ecological approach destroys every illusion of ecclesial autarchy and the mistaken hope that the church can continue to exist even in conditions hostile to the gospel by retreating within itself. On the other hand, ecclesiological reflection must also bring out fully the autonomy of the church and it will not succeed in doing so if it tries to understand the church exclusively in terms of its service in and to society. The basic intellectual problem of ecclesiology, therefore, is to combine organically the action of the church for peace and justice in society with its own distinctive reality. In other words, an integration of the ontological and the functional view of the church is needed.

III.2. To overcome the usual alternative of either an ontological or a functional way of thinking in ecclesiology, we shall try in the following outline to adopt a specific theoretical approach first developed in biology and later taken up by systematic and theoretical sociology. I am referring to the theory of autopoietic systems.<sup>1</sup> This starts from the basic question of the specific peculiarity of living beings or systems which was usually answered by reference to the phenomenon of material growth and continuation. This answer is not entirely satisfactory because it has to assume the givenness of the living system, since only a given system can relate itself to its environment and continue to propagate. The problem, therefore, is to explain how a living system as a living active unity comes into existence at all.

III.3. According to the theory of autopoietic systems, living beings and social systems belong to the class of autopoietic systems. Autopoiesis means "self-propagating" and this means that the system is organized as a network of processes which continually begets these components of the total system, whose

interactions are in turn identical with these very processes. By virtue of this recursive circularity, the system is constituted as a closed unity which is, as such, delimited from the world and, concomitantly with this, creates its own environment. The specific constellation or order of the system's elements is in each case called its organization. The autopoietic organization of a living system establishes its autonomy vis-à-vis the environment while at the same time defining its identity. If the system dissolves, it disintegrates into its components, i.e., it "dies", whereas if only the organization changes, a new type of system arises.

III.4. Only in certain temporal and spatial conditions can the autopoiesis of a living being be realized, i.e., in dependence on a concrete environment and over a period of time. Living beings, therefore, always display the features of metabolism and reproduction. While showing that no living being can exist autarchically, they do not contradict its autonomy but actually presuppose this autonomy as the condition of their possibility. For only the closure of its autopoietic organization on which its autonomy rests permits the living being to be open to and to interact with its environment. In the course of the interaction between system and environment as the area of the system's interaction, a structural coupling takes place between the two, i.e., the system changes in reaction to its environment and in dependence on it. The result of this process is known as the internal structure of the system which must be strictly distinguished from the autopoietic organization. The complete description of a concrete system therefore embraces both its organization which assigns it to a definite type of system and its structure which so to speak documents its historical development.

III.5. The relationship of closure and openness, characteristic of living things and unique to them, means that a living being in the last analysis has no purpose outside itself but exists as its own purpose. This self-referential character is the basic difference between an organism and a machine. Every machine exists as a thing totally defined by the functional cooperation of its component parts for the fulfillment of a purpose external to it and is



therefore completely open to a functional analysis. The unity of an organism, on the contrary, is defined exclusively by its autopoietic organization which, while likewise functionally organized, nevertheless serves only the self-propagation of the organism. An analysis which relates a given organism partly or even wholly to an external purpose always remains external to it, therefore, and necessarily treats it as an "inert object". Put pointedly, a living thing lives only in order to live - and in no respect to serve some other purpose. To instrumentalize living things in any way is therefore contradictory to their distinctive characteristic as ends in themselves.

#### IV.

IV.1. Social systems can be assigned to the class of autopoietic systems but differ from (purely) biological systems, above all, by the fact that their constitutive operations are communicated symbolically. In other words, the processes characteristic of the autopoietic organization are basically communicative in character. To be sure, even social systems require a material and energetic substratum as a "natural" environment but this, representing as it does only a part of the total environment of social systems, acquires a significance which differs from that which pertains in the case of biological systems. Because a social system as such is constituted by communicative processes, its limits acquire a primarily symbolic character so that, when and to the extent that they are bound up with external spatial factors, their symbolic significance has to be transmitted communicatively. The "material" aspect of these limits, on the contrary, can largely take a back seat, though it never disappears completely.

IV.2. Analogously to the development of an internal structure by the creation of organs whereby the organism relates itself to the environment, social systems in interaction with their environment create an internal differentiation by creating part-systems or sub-systems. The "organ" character of these part-systems is displayed by the fact that their structure can in principle be deduced or explained completely in terms of their specific task or

function in relation to the whole system. In other words, an "organ" serves a purpose outside itself and, in this respect, is like a machine. To the extent that it has no autopoietic organization of its own, it is unable (no longer able) to exist independently apart from the "organism". Although the development of such organs carries with it, therefore, the advantage of enhancing the performance capacity of the whole system by the cooperation of specialized part-systems, i.e., systems tailored to specific tasks, its disadvantage is that the part-systems forfeit independence and therefore become increasingly dependent on one another while the whole system also becomes increasingly dependent on them. This in turn increases the need to coordinate and integrate the part-functions and this compels, in some measure at least, because of the inherent complexity of the system, the creation of special part-systems to perform these necessary coordinating and integrating operations. The increase in internal differentiation in accordance with functional considerations thus demands a compensatory reverse development in the shape of a reciprocal penetration of the system of functions. If this regulation fails, the result is a hypertrophy of the part-systems (e.g. the creation of a bureaucratic "hydrocephaly" or "hydrocephalic" bureaucracy).

IV.3. Summing up: this means that a system's external relationships (i.e., its relations to its environment) are transmitted in principle by "organs". Its capacity for ecological interaction depends basically, therefore, on possibilities of structural formation and chance existing within the system itself. To this extent, a system never reacts "directly to environmental change but always "indirectly" by influencing the metabolism or changing itself. In one way or other, therefore, every environment leaves its mark on the system it environs, especially when affecting the inner structure of that system. In such cases, the process of a structural coupling of system and environment easily suggests a process passively endured by the system. What happens here in actual fact is always an active process: the system adapts itself to the environment. Adaptation means, therefore, that a system is open to an appropriate area of interaction by means of a development of "organs", i.e., the creation of part-systems responsible



for its relations with the environment. What are involved here, in the main, are systems for the exchange of energy, information and communication systems, and, finally, action systems. Since a whole set of "organs" exists within the system, even if spatially separate from it, the externally directed action of the system also takes place within the system itself. The more differentiated and complex the structure on the basis of which a system operates, the more manifold are its relations with the environment and, consequently its "inner world". In this sense, the ecological relationship of in-formation: the environment in-forms the system within the limits of its possibilities of form-ation, i.e., in the measure of its plasticity. The structure thereby constitutes a sort of shaped memorial of a system and, to this extent, every system carries its history with it within itself.

IV.4. In the light of this conception, it would be quite wrong to equate the autonomy of a system with the capacity to avoid environmental influences. Only an autarchic system would be able to do that. But autopoietic systems are never autarchic, nor therefore can they "ignore" their environment. Even simple systems which can live anywhere, so to speak, depend on their environment. Their simplicity is due to their concentration on a few universal characteristics of the world in their external relationships, i.e., their environment matches in its poverty of aspects the system's own low degree of complexity. But that alters not a whit their autonomy since this is based exclusively on their autopoietic organization. If we can nevertheless rightly speak of a greater dependency of complex systems, this is because, in virtue of their greater capacity to change their area of interaction, they are not dependent on a quite specific and narrowly defined environment. Even simple systems can, in virtue of their autopoietic organization, prove amazingly rich in life, though only so long as their environment remains stable or invariable within narrow limits of tolerance, of course. If, however, a change of some significance for the system takes place, a really perfect act of adaptability can suddenly turn out to be an evolutionary dead end

and a fatal step. In this sense, the problem does not lie in the adaptation as such but rather in the loss or diminished degree of adaptability, so that the decisive question is simply why the system's structural flexibility becomes limited.

IV.5. There is no direct connection between autonomy and adaptability since autopoiesis as such does not require any structure in particular. In itself, the autopoietic organization only establishes the striving of the system to reality itself "in all circumstances". Put simply: life wants to live - only that and nothing else. As the term itself implies, "auto-nomy" contains only the possibility of a system, of self-realization according to its own law, i.e., of realizing itself as itself. But this "law", which in an active sense is what sets the standard decisively for an autopoietic system, resides in the internal order of the system as the basis of its identity. As long, therefore, as the autopoiesis of a system is guaranteed, its internal order constitutes the only substantial limit to its adaptability. This means that while an autopoietic system does not have to develop any particular structure, it can nevertheless only develop structures which do not endanger either its autopoiesis or its order. The internal order of a system does not act vis-à-vis the structure, it can nevertheless only develop structures as a determinant but as a selective criterion. To be sure, when the pressure to adapt threatens to force on the system structures which destroy or could destroy its identity, the system needs structures of action which help to influence the environment in a direction more favorable to the system's self-realization. In principle, of course, an endangered system can also react by limiting its openness and by trying to reduce the possibilities of environmental influence. Because of the constitutive lack of autarchy, however, its room for manoeuvre here is limited. Moreover, a merely defensive attitude to environmental influences inevitably means also a restriction of the system's possibilities of development. In the long run, a purely defensive strategy can only work to its disadvantage. This means that we must consider as the optimal order of a system an order which is compatible with a maximum of structural flexibility.



## V.

V.1. Obviously, any attempt to apply these reflections fruitfully to ecclesiology is bound to provoke a whole series of objections which cannot all be considered and discussed within the tight limits of this sketch. The following reflections will largely have to be self-explanatory in this respect. One critical point, however, must be mentioned specifically. The whole argument rests, of course, on a quite fundamental premise: namely, that it is possible and permissible to compare the church with other social systems. Anyone who denies this premise and regards the church as a social structure *sui generis*, one which defies all such comparisons and which, in other words, can only be understood in terms of itself, has obviously already rejected as illegitimate the task undertaken in this paper. To discuss this would be a theological task which undoubtedly includes certain controversial aspects, especially concerning the connection between the order of creation and the order of redemption. In as much as this paper rests on the condition that redemption must at least also be understood as the restoration of the order of creation, it deliberately adopts a "catholic" perspective, on the basis of which social theory insights undoubtedly have ecclesiological relevance. In view of ecclesiological controversies, it seems not to be mere tautology to insist here on the view that the church differs from other social systems solely and exclusively by its identity as church and not by virtue of being a completely singular phenomenon in the social world.

V.2. Roman Catholic ecclesiology, which prefers to think in ontological terms, understands the "nature" of the church to mean in the main the basis of its identity. This procedure conceals two disadvantages which must be avoided, not least in respect of ecumenism. For one thing, the danger which constantly threatens the ontological approach is that of a more or less subtle Platonism which interprets (i.e., misinterprets) the concrete church as the phenomenal form of an idea. For another thing, the ontological approach, just because it thinks of the "essence" as the unvarying substratum of all realized historical phenomenal

forms. In particular, the frequently advanced thesis that the church must constantly change precisely in order to remain the same requires an answer to the question as to what then actually changes or should change, i.e., what exactly constitutes the church's "self"?

V.3. In the view based on the systems theory, the permanently vital interest in the problem of identity with its inevitable concentration on the invariability aspect can be combined organically with a dynamic approach in which the "essence" can in fact be thought of without contradiction as the basis of historical development and adaptation. For a system's "order", as the system's immanent identity-establishing element, is actually realized as a specification of the autopoietic organization, i.e., as a process-structure. To express this inner dynamic in ontological terms, we can resort to Heidegger's definition of "essence" as "process". In this sense, our proposal here for discussion is that Paul's term *oikodome* (edification or upbuilding) be used to define the church's autopoiesis. The church's order is to be understood as the vis-à-vis of ministry and community while the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments are to be understood as the communicative process which are essential in the sense of autopoietic organization. From the standpoint of the circularity of organization, baptism and ordination take on a special significance here since these two acts engender the two constituent elements of organization, i.e., the members of the community on the one hand and the office bearers on the other, while at the same time permitting a recursive application to themselves: baptism equips for baptizing and ordination of ordaining.

V.4. The church is edified (built up) by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. Following the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, the same material content may also be formulated as follows: the church realized itself as *communio* and its communal "essence" finds its clearest expression in the celebration of the Eucharist. The church realized itself in the celebration of the Eucharist by building itself up as



the church - and conversely. This means, however, that neither the office-bearers (ministers) nor the members of the community are to be misinterpreted as "organs" of fellowship, since in that case they would confront each other as, for example, functionaries and clientele, related to each other by specific performances. On the contrary, the functional relation between ministry and community, which defines the church's order, is to be recognized as a function of Christian churches in accordance with the essence of the church only when it is exercised in a spirit of devoted love to the community. Whenever this spirit is missing, the office-bearer degenerates into a mere stopgap and functionary who in turn degrades members of the community into mere objects of "ecclesiastical services". If the community's expectations then also become tailored to this functionary business, the church is inevitably transformed into an industry for the satisfaction of religious requirements.

V.5. In actively preaching the Word and administering the sacraments, the church realizes itself as an end in itself. This character of being an end in itself has its basis in the fact that the community as which the church as such "proceeds" for its own sake is willed by God himself. In no way does this exclude the idea of the church's mission in and to the world; it does compel us, however, to understand the undertaking of this mission as an act of free obedience rooted in and growing out of faith but not identical with faith. Just as each individual calling within the church presupposes and must respect the personal freedom of the called person, so the mission of the church as a whole presupposes its communal essence which it continues to preserve entirely. In other words, when the church serves its Lord, it does so not as a passive instrument but as a serving community of brothers and sisters, and when God works in the world in and through his elect people, the "purpose" of the church no more consists in the result of such working than, for example, children of a community of love within marriage constitute the goal of marriage. Every ecclesiological conception which suppresses or

denies the character of the church as an end in itself and adopts an instrumentalist view, inevitably reinforces in practice the "institutional" features of the church and allows its communal identity to pale into insignificance.

## VI.

VI.1. The constitutive self-reference of the autopoietic organization of the church makes it impossible to equate mission and/or diaconia with the "essence" of the church. It is vitally important, on the contrary, to reflect on mission and diaconia in the light of the "essence" of the church, i.e., to relate them to the church's "self".

Nor is it satisfactory to define mission or diaconia as expressions of the "essence" of the church. This is certainly true in a broad sense but is no help in defining precisely the specific relationship between, on the one hand, mission and diaconia, and, on the other hand, the identity and structures of the church. For this purpose, it must be stressed, from the standpoint of systems-theory, firstly, that mission differs fundamentally from the church's autopoiesis. For what is involved in mission is not the self-propagation of church life but rather, in biological terms, the problem of the reproduction of the church "organism". The biological function of every form of reproduction is the trustworthiest possible transmission of genetic information. If, therefore, the identity of "mother" and "daughter" organism in the biological field depends on the invariance of the genetic pattern, then the "ecclesiality" of a "young church" which emerges as the result of mission depends on the harmony of its internal order with that of the "mother" church. The process whereby a new church emerges is not to be confused, therefore, either with the process of edifying an (already existing) church or with the process of adapting the church to a particular environment. Its sole purpose is the "begetting" of an autopoietic organization with its characteristic concrete order. The church can therefore develop different missionary structures ("organs of reproduction") or forms of apostolate whose variety is limited only by their utility in fulfilling their basic functions, namely, the "begetting" of



new churches. Once an autopoietic organization exists, the "young church" is able, to speak, "to stand on its own two feet", and "to live its own life". It follows from this that it is not the church which serves the mission but the mission which serves the church, which in turn employs missionary processes and structures.

VI.2. Unlike mission, diaconia is not aimed at the constitution of autopoietic systems of the same order ("young churches") but at a change in the sphere of interaction between already existing systems. In other words, therefore, what is involved is in principle a process of adaptation. Whereas the success or failure of mission depends basically on the precision of the "genetic communication", i.e., the guarantee that the same order is begotten, quite different criteria underlie the judgment as to the success or otherwise of diaconal action: firstly, compatibility with the identity of the church and, secondly, adequation vis-à-vis the church's environment. From the structural standpoint, in this case the order of the church works selectively, leaving its mark on the environment. Therefore the church must above all change its structures when they reflect the outcome of an accommodation (adaptation) which endangers the identity of the church as *Communio*. To this extent, therefore, the inner reform of church structures represents an act of self-affirmation on the church's part, in virtue of which the church seeks to maintain and reinforce its identity as church. In this sense, the development of diaconal structures whereby the church seeks to influence society is commanded and directed by its very "essence" without church life being therein exhausted.

VI.3. The inner unity of *communio* and *diakonia* on the basis of their difference is presented and explained very clearly in the section of the Lima Document devoted to the Eucharist. There it is stated:

The eucharist embraces all aspects of life. It is a representative act of thanksgiving and offering on behalf of the whole world. The eucharistic celebration demands reconciliation and sharing among all those regarded as

brothers and sisters in the one family of God and is a constant challenge in the search for appropriate relationships in social, economic and political life.... All kinds of injustice, racism, separation and lack of freedom are radically challenged when we share in the body and blood of Christ. Through the eucharist the all-renewing grace of God penetrates and restores human personality and dignity. The eucharist involves the believer in the central event of the world's history (No. 20).

Moreover:

Solidarity in the eucharistic communion of the body of Christ and responsible care of Christians for one another and the world find specific expression in the liturgies: in the mutual forgiveness of sins; the sign of peace; intercession for all; the eating and drinking together; the taking of the elements to the sick and those in prison or the celebration of the eucharist with them. All these manifestations of love in the eucharist are directly related to Christ's own testimony as a servant, in whose servanthood Christians themselves participate. "As God in Christ has entered into the human situation, so eucharistic liturgy is near to the concrete and particular situations of men and women. In the early church the ministry of deacons and deaconesses gave expression in a special way to this aspect of the eucharist. The place of such ministry between the table and the needy properly testifies to the redeeming presence of Christ in the world (No. 21).<sup>2</sup>

Far from gathering believers together in some peaceful preserve sheltered from all social tensions, the eucharistic liturgy above all, as the most intimate practice of communion, shows them their place in the midst of the conflicts of society. In doing so, it confirms the basic correctness of the systems-theory perspective.



Concentration on the aspect of autopoiesis in no way leads to an introverted ecclesiocentrism but only sharpens our awareness of the irreversible conditioning relationship between closure and openness in the process of church life.

VI.4. Church structures which contradict the internal order of the church and the communion which it establishes can be described as "heretical". This description rests on a definite notion of the distinctiveness of Christian preaching. Certainly by no precautions whatsoever can the church ensure that the Word of God it addresses to human beings meets with a response among them and, when this actually happens, in the final analysis it is God who works the miracle. The problem of preaching, however, cannot be reduced simply to the preaching of the Word since people's willingness to respond in faith to the preached Word as God's Word depends fundamentally on the credibility of the church which must attest both by its life and its form the renewing power of faith if it is not to brand its message as a lie. In this sense, the capacity for self-criticism and therefore for structural reform is one of the conditions of the credibility of the church's proclamation:

The Church, as a structured community ... has the responsibility to be so open to this transforming presence of God that the Church itself becomes the unmistakably clear sign of this presence in history.... If the Church cannot itself demonstrate the transforming power of God's Word, then it cannot realistically continue to proclaim it. And if it cannot offer mankind a glimpse of the final Kingdom even now - a kingdom of reconciliation, peace and new life - then it cannot legitimately continue to indulge itself in lussions about the future

For the structural form of the church, this means that

Whatever structural forms the Church may adopt, the Christian community must always be distinguished as the co-

munity of men and women who confess the Lordship of Jesus of Nazareth, who ratify that faith sacramentally, and who commit themselves to membership and mission for the sake of God's Kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

VI.5. Against this background, the Second Vatican Council's officially endorsed ecclesiological view of the church's sacramentality gains in plausibility, in social and political significance. In plausibility: because of the clearer emphasis on the fact that the church's sacramentality is actually rooted in the mutual relationship between proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments as the constitutive process whereby the church is built up as a communion. In social and political significance: because it is made clear that the church works for peace and justice in society, first and foremost, by its self-realization as church. Since this self-realization necessarily includes the church's openness to society and conversely, society therefore also influences the church, it is impossible in principle to avoid the reflection of social conflicts in the life of the church. It is not in virtue of any conflict-free harmony, therefore, that the church differs from society but only in virtue of the effort to take the strain of these internal conflicts in the power of the Holy Spirit and in this way to resolve them. The Faith and Order Commission rightly affirmed in its Accra statement, therefore:

Christian faith trusts the reality of grace in which it is empowered to bear the tensions of conflicts. Jesus Christ accepted the necessity of conflict, yet transcended it in his death on the Cross. He took upon himself the cost of conflict; forces of division are finally overcome in the unity which Christ creates and gives, as he leads all things to unity in himself. The Church has also been given remarkable anticipations of this unity, even in the midst of severe conflict. The Church must, therefore, bear the tension of conflicts within itself, and so fulfil its ministry of reconciliation,



in obedience to the Lord who chooses to sacrifice himself rather than to confer on the forces of division any ultimate authority. The Church accordingly is called to work for unity, through suffering, under the sign of the cross.

The church's sacramentality, therefore, is organically connected with its social and political activity:

The Church is called to be a visible sign of the presence of Christ, who is both hidden and revealed to faith, reconciling and healing human alienation in the worshipping community. The Church's calling to be such a sign includes struggle and conflict for the sake of the just interdependence of mankind.<sup>5</sup>

## VII.

VII.1. In ecclesiology it has become second nature almost to trace invariant features of church life back to a divine establishment or decree and, correspondingly, to interpret all variable elements as changeable precisely because these supposedly exist only in virtue of human law. But such a distribution is unacceptable in the case of the church in particular since it is not only the invariable that is rooted in principle in the will of God (i.e., the order of the church as the basis of its identity) but also the variable (i.e., its structures), since only both together, invariance and variability, actually make church life possible. To this extent, there are basically no purely "secular" or theologically neutral structures in the church. In other words, they are all subject both to the criterion of serviceability and to the criterion of compatibility with the order or "essence" of the church.

VII.2. To summarize: Although, as we have shown, church structures always emerge as the result of a structural coupling of church and social environment, as outcome of a historically conditioned adaptation, they nevertheless can and must be interpreted and evaluated dogmatically as the fruit of the spirit if they

satisfy the two criteria mentioned. It is equally true, conversely, that, whether it be a question of canon law or finance, of the structures of interchurch aid or social diaconia, etc., the concrete structural form of the church must always be judged and justified on the basis of its "essence" as *communio*.

VII.3. These reflections have thus come full circle. If the church's essence as *communio* is realized in the celebration of the Eucharist, i.e., if the church is built up (edified) by the Eucharist and in the Eucharist, then the theological critique of church structures is equivalent to viewing them in the light of the eucharistic reality and vision and every criticism in which this happens can be regarded as "edifying", as constructive criticism. Judged by the criterion of eucharistic fellowship, however, peace and justice are undoubtedly essential criteria of such criticism and this applies equally both to every individual community and to the whole church as the *communio communiorum*.

VII.4. This fundamental viewpoint has been expressed in exemplary fashion by Konrad Raiser in the context of the WCC study on "Ecumenical Sharing". He writes:

The church as *koinonia* is founded on the participation of all members in the body of Christ who shared his life with us even to death on the cross. The sharing together, in the eucharist, in the body and blood of Christ is the origin of *koinonia* as a community of sharing, and not the reverse. The radical over-turning of human values in regard to wealth, status, power, etc. through the cross of Jesus Christ constantly opens the way afresh in sharing a fellowship....

The church as *koinonia* is called to be a living example of an effective community of sharing, prefiguring the fellowship in the kingdom of God. But wherever the church takes form among people, it is subject to the conditions of human life. It needs structures and regulations. Hence the church is always caught up in the tension between the language of sharing and the language of established structures. Any attempt to make the reality of *koinonia*, opened up by



God in Jesus Christ, into an ideal system is bound to fail. We can and must strive to make the relationships between the churches with their structures and regulations just, and to ensure that the exercise of power and authority within and between church structures - especially where money is concerned - is subject to effective and transparent control. But all that will still not guarantee that genuine sharing will be brought about in practice within and between these structures. In the last analysis, only the freedom granted the spirit of God can help us to do that.

The church as *koinonia*, as a worldwide fellowship of solidarity sharing life together - that vision is at once a description of the origin and the goal of the church; a statement about the church as the body of Christ, in the light of its eucharistic reality and in the light of its eschatological potential. We could not talk about the church in this way unless this experience of *koinonia* really existed. Today we are see the rediscovery of the church as a sharing community in many places. But at the same time we have to admit that, as corporate institutions, most of our churches rarely live up to that image. This tension ... is ... the driving force behind all processes of renewal in the church. The ecumenical movement lives in this tension and is nourished by it and the vision of a community of shared life is still one of the most powerful goals of the ecumenical quest.<sup>6</sup>

VII.5. As the ecumenical movement seeks to renew the church on the basis of the Eucharist, it contributes at the same time to the renewal of human society which stand in a co-evolutionary relationship with the church. The church has no political mission. The calling it obeys and serves is a spiritual one and thereby at the same time a profoundly human calling. It is free and under obligation to be itself. But the more fully the church achieves self-realization, the less possible it becomes for society to remain as it is. Thus the church serves - in accordance with the will of God - both as the leaven and the salt of the earth.

*Translated from the German by David Lewis*

## NOTES

- 1 For the reflection which follows, references may be made to a number of introductory studies dealing with the theory of autopoietic systems:

Humberto R. Maturana, *Erkennen: Die Organisation und Verkörperung von Wirklichkeit*, Brunswick and Wiesbaden, 1982;

Siegfried J. Schmidt, *Der Diskurs des radikalen Konstruktivismus*, Frankfurt/M, 1987;

Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme. Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie*, Frankfurt/M,

Hans Haferkamp and Michael Schmid (eds), *Kommunikation und soziale Differenzierung. Beiträge zu Luhmanns Theorie sozialer Systeme*, Frankfurt/M, 1987

- 2 Cf. George Steiner, *Heidegger*, in Fontana Modern Masters series, ed. Frank Kermode, Fontana/Collins, 1978, p. 61
- 3 Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer (eds), *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, WCC, Geneva, 1984, p. 479
- 4 Richard McBrien, "The Church: Sign and Instrument of Unity", in *Concilium*, Vol. 58 (1970), pp. 45-52, here p. 51
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 49
- 6 "Toward Unity in Tension", in *Uniting in Hope. Reports and Documents from the Meeting of the Faith and Order Commission*, Accra 1974, Faith and Order Paper No. 72, WCC, Geneva, 1975, pp. 90-94, here p. 93
- 7 Konrad Raiser, "Towards a Sharing Community", in *Sharing Life. Official Report of the WCC World Consultation on Koinonia: Sharing Life in a World Community*, WCC, Geneva, 1989, pp. 13-24, here pp. 19-20



# CONFESSIONALITY AND CONTEXTUALITY

## REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION IN BAD BOLL INCLUDING THE THREE WORKING GROUP REPORTS

*Götz Planer-Friedrich*

### **I. The task of theology in the conciliar process for peace and justice**

The recommendations of Working Group 13 at the Seventh LWF Assembly in Budapest (13.1.2) draw our attention to the theological and ethical basis of our struggle for peace.<sup>1</sup> It is not only the Lutheran World Federation that demands that the Christian peace efforts be theologically qualified and have an ethical foundation. Likewise, the recommendation of the WCC Assembly in Vancouver challenges its member churches to participate in a conciliar process for justice peace and the integrity of creation.<sup>2</sup> This shows that the churches' responsibility for peace is increasingly being regarded as a theological or, rather, an ecclesiological problem. A series of regional and international ecumenical meetings are to deepen and broaden the theological perception finally leading up to a worldwide convocation in 1990 at which the Roman Catholic Church will also participate.

The LWF has taken up this issue with the study program on a Theology of Just Peace. The very title can easily be misinterpreted. We are not speaking of a secondary theology ("genitive theology") which, according to its critics, reduces the complexity of theological reflection to one of its elements. We are not trying to develop a systematic model of theology as such seen from the point of view of the responsibility for peace, but, rather, to assign the Christian peace effort to already existing theological systematics. In other words, opinions and views about the existence or the non-existence of a "just peace" do not constitute a theology.

However, there is a place for peace and justice in theological systematics. The concern of a "theology of just peace" is to find, to critically analyze and possibly to constructively fill this place - or the different placements - of peace with justice in theology (or in the theologies).

The fact that the title already tries to relate peace to justice might give rise to another misunderstanding. In its "Statement on Peace and Justice" the LWF Assembly in 1984 declared that "there is no peace without justice and no justice without peace".<sup>3</sup> Already at the Sixth Assembly in Dar es Salaam it was considered important that "these problems of peace and economic justice are studied as a whole and that combined strategies are developed within the overlapping conflicts of east-west and north-south."<sup>4</sup> In the long term this appears to be promising for the churches only if they rediscover and strengthen the interdependence of justice and peace in the biblical witness.

The thematic formulation of "theology of just peace" could create the impression that in theological terms a preliminary decision has already been taken regarding the relationship between peace and justice. This is however only partially true, since it very much depends on our understanding of the substance (and theology) of justice on the one hand and peace on the other. The Assembly in Budapest resolved that "peace is the will of God for the whole creation"<sup>5</sup>. This sentence is theologically as indisputable as it is ethically indifferent. Only when combined with the reversible sentence: No peace without justice - no justice without peace can its meaning be interpreted. God's will for creation is concretely expressed in humanity's incomplete and charged responses to the manifestation of his will. Thus the task of theology is to analyze and critically accompany this relationship as well as to develop it constructively.

The thematic construction "theology of just peace" should be understood as being an effort to make concrete the theologically spiritualized concept of peace with the aid of the ethically rele-



vant understanding of justice. In other words, one must not see the one as limiting the other but rather as being complementary and mutually enriching.

Theological reflection is not carried out in an historical vacuum. It is influenced by the changing constellations of historical change, by sociological and political circumstances as well as by the individual position of the respective theologian in this connection.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, the general validity of theological insights is thereby limited, whilst, on the other, they become more concrete and more relevant.

When combining the basic issues with the concrete challenge the task of theology in the area of peace and justice may be described as follows:

- to recognize and reflect upon life situations of Christians under different circumstances as being the context of theology;
- to understand and treat as an integral part of the theological task socioethical questions which entail political responsibility and decisions;
- to develop the biblical witness hermeneutically in order to become fully aware of God's promise and demands in view of the special situation;
- to make full use of the wealth of theological traditions and Christian forms of life in order to be liberated from the captivity of onesided arguments and individual ties.

Finally, including all that has been said above, what we are aiming at is to develop under the present circumstances<sup>7</sup> a creative model for the life in common of all human beings as disciples of Jesus Christ.

## **II. Concept and methodology of the LWF consultation on a Theology of Just Peace**

Having thus described our task, certain methodological decisions arise from it. The preamble of the second Group Report goes into

further detail. The wish to arrive at a theological clarification of existing Christian positions and initiatives in the areas of peace and justice is not merely the result of purely academic thinking but of very concrete church-political interests. This does not mean that there is a contradiction between the two: theological thought is always based on special interest, whilst church political demands are to be regarded as being theologically relevant. Yet, if the origin of the issues is more likely to be related to decision-making processes in the church rather than to theological discourse, then this is as relevant for the methodology as it is for the results.

In this case the methodology chosen was a more inductive procedure. In contrast to deductive epistemological processes of perception, used in classical European theology (at least since the adoption of Aristotelianism by Thomas Aquinas) the inductive process is geared to concrete experiences and positive results of previous theological reflection. During the epistemological process these are analyzed as to their differences and convergences. In this case the result cannot be of a dogmatic nature. Rather, what is at stake here is to find unity in diversity and to discover possibilities of solidarity despite different interests.

This methodological approach has a twofold use. It is neither accidental nor arbitrary that in the area of peace and justice interests vary. Let us for instance take the example of the nuclear threat. This is perceived differently depending on whether the persons concerned live in the starting or target areas of nuclear missiles, whether their immediate environment is already jeopardized by nuclear tests or whether they are amongst those who survived the first actual use of these weapons. The meaning of justice is perceived differently by people whose individual rights to freedom are restricted than by those whose lives are daily threatened by starvation. Thus the interest in changing or keeping the respective status quo very much depends upon the extent that people are personally affected. This does not preclude the possibility of putting these interests into a broader, overarching



context showing them to be different responses to complex operative mechanisms. If such mechanisms can be identified and described the different interests can be understood as being complementary and no longer need to be understood as being opposed to or competing with each other.

Something similar might be said as regards the ecumenical exchange of theological arguments and socioethical positions. The very distinct social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church provides it with an authoritative framework for its socioethical pronouncements. In the historical "peace churches" the pacifist option belongs to their very confessional basis. Hitherto Reformation churches could only accept socioethical decisions as being ecclesiologically relevant under the terms of a "casus confessionis". Despite serious differences in their structure and decision-making processes, these churches have much in common as regards their striving for peace and justice. These commonalities can be traced back to the common origin, the biblical witness and the confession of the one Lord (also, as mentioned above, the compatible perception of a particular situation). Hence the hope that in view of the common threat to humanity we come to a common position and act consistently in solidarity is justified. The convergences of diverse church statements on peace with justice confirm this expectation. The socioethical positions with regard to the condemnation of weapons of mass destruction and the - somewhat qualified - rejection of nuclear deterrence are in fact quite similar. Ecumenically relevant questions arise only when the ecclesial authority of such statements as well as the possible consequences for the community of churches as such as well as for the individual Christian are being discussed.

When designing the program of the consultation we intended, on the one hand, to consider contextual interests and priorities as complex responses to a global constellation of problems; on the other, to deal with confessional peculiarities of theological positions as an integral element of ecumenical social ethics. In order to clarify this a paper on "The Theology of Just Peace - An

Ecumenical Task"<sup>8</sup> was sent to all participants prior to the consultation. However, the course and findings of the consultation show that our goal was not reached. This may be due to the fact that the paper included an analysis of all the ecumenically important documents of individual churches but did not take into consideration that in certain contexts the emphasis needed to be shifted from peace to justice and vice versa. In view of the fact that positions largely converged there was a willingness to try to understand the theological line of argumentation of other Christian traditions, whereas it proved more difficult, beyond the pressure of current problems, to bring together the various vested interests to form a common strategy.

Methodologically the consultation had three phases:

1. Identifying the problem of "peace and justice" in different contexts;
2. defining ethical criteria and church traditions to assess peace and justice;
3. peace and justice in the teachings and structure of the church.

a) Unfortunately the broad spectrum of perspectives which we had hoped for remained rather selective since already in the first stage two speakers representing major geopolitical areas (Asia and Europe) were unable to attend. This may very well account for the fact that insufficient attention was paid to the complementary character of the different viewpoints. Above all, we failed to make the representatives of the Southern hemisphere see just under how much pressure the European and North American churches were when they put the question of demilitarizing the East-West conflict into the foreground of their reflections and actions. Only vague allusions were made to the fact that disarmament in the North can mean greater economic justice for the South, and political detente in the East-West conflict can lead to better conditions for an independent political and economic development in the South. How could it be otherwise - given the skeptical if not pessimistic debate on this subject.<sup>9</sup>



The participants from the Northern hemisphere were struck and at times speechless upon hearing reports on the situation both in South Africa and in Latin America. There was no lack of solidarity. Yet a number of the participants realized that the notion of the churches' peace work both in the West and in the East still fails to take into consideration the expectations and hopes of those people who suffer under outrageous injustices. It is at this very point that different interests as well as experiences arising from different concepts and thinking patterns come into conflict.<sup>10</sup>

This was clearly illustrated by the different types of theological interpretation. In the context of a racist or economic system of apartheid neither the doctrine of just war nor Christian pacifism provide clear alternative explanations or ways of acting. Christians taking an active part in the antiapartheid struggle in South Africa remained suspicious of the "Northern" Christian peace debate. In their view it considers illegitimate the struggle for freedom which has inevitably escalated to using violence. From this perspective the term "peace" is too often misused, as Sibusiso Bengu explains in his paper. It is striking that it is precisely those people who still today regard nuclear deterrence as being a political necessity in the East-West conflict and deem it ethically justifiable who at the same time plead for absolute non-violence on the part of liberation movements, and speak of terrorism when those who are oppressed and deprived of their rights try to defend themselves. No such voices were heard at the consultation; this is probably due to the fact that such ethically questionable views come less from the churches themselves but rather from political areas where Christian attributes serve merely to veil concrete claims to power.

Two things become quite evident: first of all, the "Northern" churches manifest an increasing sense of independence as churches. They are less and less prepared to endorse a certain political orientation and are more openly formulating their theologically and ethically motivated opposition to political practice. But they have not, so far, managed to voice their protest in such

a manner that the distinction between political stances rooted in Christianity and the political responsibility of the church is made quite clear. The idea that Christianity and power politics constitute a unity in both Europe and North America still prevails in the countries of the South that were once christianized and colonized by the North.

This does to a certain extent explain the fact that Southern theologians still mistrust Northern theological tradition which seen from this perspective seems unified rather than confessionally divided. The Kairos Document is an example of how criticism leveled against those "theological models" that legitimate the bad status quo is experienced as an act of liberation from tutelage.<sup>11</sup> In contrast to the Marxist theories of liberation, the distinction is made here between the message of the gospel and its instrumentalization. Some theologians feel that the "option for the poor and the oppressed", as is propounded especially by Latin American liberation theology, is such an instrumentalization of the gospel. It needs to be pointed out that liberation theology does not justify certain political practices, but rather is engaged in theological reflection upon intolerable conditions and the ethical motivation behind the desire to change them. Even the Vatican in its "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation" concedes this.<sup>12</sup>

b) In view of the ecumenical composition of the consultation the second phase was far less controversial as regards theology than one might have expected. On closer inspection the documents presented and explained at the consultation turn out to already have an ecumenical approach. Obviously the crucial issues specific to a certain confession did not touch upon the sensitive areas of the interconfessional controversy. This became apparent by the broad acceptance of the creation-based theological approach of Orthodoxy and the positive presentation of the document published by the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Methodist document, "In Defense of Creation", by the Lutheran theologian, Marcia Bunge (USA).



Doubtless this is due to decades of ecumenical discussions which have promoted the understanding of the particular concerns of other churches or confessions. One might add that the concrete subject of this theological controversy - peace and justice - stimulates dialogue in a way that is not easily matched. Peace and justice are not the property of any particular church or confession. They are problems that affect the whole of humanity, and the churches have their own approach to them but not an exclusive claim.

This affects the theological argumentation. All documents we dealt with show the intention of establishing a broad consensus over and above individual churches and even religious affiliations. What the Christian faith contributes in this respect does not contradict common sense and vice versa. One may argue this premise since it touches upon aspects that have to do with revelation theology but they are only of minor importance in this socioethical area. It is here that we may assume that the church in both its words and actions is concerned with humanity as a whole and regards God's creation as being one. The documents mentioned above are a good illustration of this.

This all-embracing perspective benefits the interconfessional understanding without suppressing arguments specific to each confession. Rather, it places them into a broader context. Agreeing upon the results of a particular socioethical and theological discourse does not depend upon previously agreeing to the confession of any church. It is true that each document primarily addresses its own church members and appeals to the existing community in its own tradition. This is done with a missionary intention in the broadest sense of the word, i.e., not in terms of proselytizing, but rather to convert humanity from a more or less subconscious necrophilia (E. Fromm) to the preservation of life.

Hence the discussion essentially revolved around the question of which arguments and lines of reasoning are appropriate in order to reach this goal. Despite the fact that both the US Roman Catholic bishops and the Methodists explicitly use the doctrine of just war in their documents this doctrine was largely rejected.<sup>13</sup>

It was difficult to reconcile the dominating pacifist tendency with the acceptance of the use of violence in liberation struggles. Little was contributed to a clearer distinction between war and other forms of violence but the difficulty was analytical not theological. In accordance with the current interpretation of the just war doctrine, the existence of weapons of mass destruction thwart any legitimation of a future war. Eventually, this leads to the demand that war as an institution be abolished. Yet this does not entail an absolute no to violence. This argument would allow for the possible use of violence by a government to maintain order or the right to violent resistance. The question whether under certain circumstances this is ethically justifiable remained unanswered.

One should not be surprised that the whole issue of non-violent resistance was not explicitly discussed at the consultation. Giving several examples, Dale Ott, the representative of one of the historical peace churches, illustrated their stance on non-violence where the willingness to suffer the painful consequences of this standpoint is of prime importance. Time and time again genuine pacifists have attracted violent abuse by those who think differently. Thus throughout history Christian "victors" have time and time again haughtily asserted that the gospel alone was not much to show off with.

This does not mean that the churches should exclude the Sermon on the Mount from their socioethical debate. Admittedly it presupposes a certain identification with its author - Jesus Christ<sup>14</sup> - which considerably impedes communication over and above limited confessional boundaries. But is not the church itself a "societal" organism, a sign for the kingdom of God in history? Does it not provide a framework for realizing something that otherwise can only be sensed and hoped for? How about peace and justice in the teachings and structures of the church itself?

c) The third phase of the consultation was dedicated to this aspect of the subject. Especially within the Lutheran churches it has been much discussed whether, being sociopolitical categories, peace and justice can indeed be the subjects of the church's



teaching or influence the form it takes. Article 7 of the *Confessio Augustana* is often used as a basis for the argument. It teaches the following: *ad veram unitatem ecclesiae satis est consentire de doctrina evangelii et de administratione sacramentorum*. (For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments.) Clearly, the "satis est" refers to the ecumenicity of the understanding of the church and therefore provides a certain leeway for varying "ceremonies" and also for variable structures of the church. In this respect, the formula in CA 7 does not preclude that other aspects be added to the churchliness of the church but they must comply with the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, that is to say, they must enable rather than hinder it.

One can hardly dispute the fact that peace and justice are major components of the gospel. The conclusions to be drawn from this for the church itself and for individual confessors might possibly be controversial. Unless peace and justice are so-called *adiaphora* (cf. FC *Solida Declaratio* X), every Christian "is obligated to confess openly, not only by words but also through their deeds and actions."<sup>15</sup> The 1977 LWF Assembly in Dar es Salaam used "status confessionis" to interpret apartheid in church and state in South Africa to be a threat to the unity of the church and thus raised an issue of justice to the level of confession.<sup>16</sup> To do so, the Assembly in Dar es Salaam used the theological aid of the concept of the sacrament: if the eucharistic communion is impaired by the unchristian distinction between races, then the confessing Christian community as a whole is jeopardized. This convinced even rather skeptical "Western" church representatives.<sup>17</sup>

Not only the Roman Catholic theologian, H.-G. Stobbe, but also before him the South African, A. Bhiman, examine this relationship between sacrament and the social responsibility of Christians. There is a sensory perception of the special "societal"

form of the church during the Eucharist. It is actually rather disgraceful that the churches have in fact come to blows about the central act of unity and equality and have excluded one another (or one party only) from this meal of reconciliation.

Thus it becomes all the more apparent that the Eucharist, the renewal of the community with Christ and amongst Christians, becomes the turning point of an ecumenical theology of peace and justice. To make it quite clear: as long as we as Christians, for ideological reasons, deny each other the right to participate at the table with the One Lord we are not in a position to act against unjust and peaceless ideologies outside of the church. Until his death on the cross Jesus Christ lived according to his teaching. By using theological evasions the church may not extract itself from the responsibility of integrating the gospel, which it proclaims into its living structures.

Due to the illness of H.-R. Reuter (FEST, Heidelberg) there was no paper on the theological context. Hence the important contribution of the Roman Catholic ecumenicist H.-G. Stobbe (Münster) seemed somewhat out of context and was not sufficiently discussed. I believe, however, that his reflections are of particular importance to the further study of the subject. I shall come back to them when reviewing the findings of the consultation.

### **III. Tasks for the work in groups**

The following was stated in the suggestions for the work in groups:

Our aim is to formulate a text in which we intend to express whatever ecumenical consensus is possible. This, however, should not prevent us from noting existing divergences and contextual differences. This text is to be a contribution to a conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation."

Two formal reasons might explain why we did not quite reach our goal. First of all, the time allocated to the coordination of the



different texts in the final plenary session was too brief. The result of this was that some parts of the group reports could not be read out whilst others had not even been sufficiently discussed within the group.

The second reason is more serious. On the part of European and North American theology the discussion of this subject with theologians from the so-called Third World appears to be only in its early stages. For example, what has hitherto been published by the LWF on the peace question, either focused on the ideological conflict between East and West, or on the confessional differences between Reformed and Lutheran theologians.<sup>18</sup> The Second Symposium on "Theology of Peace" held in Budapest at the same time as the consultation in Bad Boll conveyed very much the same experience: not only do the theologians from the Southern hemisphere have different background experiences, which means that they give precedence to justice over the preservation of peace but they also no longer accept the classical methods of theological discourse; rather, as their assertiveness grows, they develop a reception of the apostolic witness based on symbols and prophetic elements.

This becomes obvious when looking at the two papers compiled by the first group whose task was formulated as follows:

Aspects that endanger peace in the current situation of the world seen as contextual elements of a theology of just peace.

Thus the group was to coordinate through theological reflections, the various ways of identifying the conditions and developments that endanger peace. It, however, decided to treat both aspects of the question separately and from a methodological point of view that stands to reason - the result being two totally independent drafts which due to time pressure could not be made consistent with one another. The author of the theological section is the South African theologian Alex Bhiman. By using biblical images and symbols he tries to interpret rather than to reason. Only his

reference to the biblical concept of the covenant shows his theological origins in the Reformed tradition. This might also be explained by the upgrading of this concept by the WCC in its conciliar process.<sup>19</sup>

The first part was drafted by the Lutheran theologian Ulrich Schmitthenner who for a short period has worked with the WCC's Desk coordinating the conciliar process. He regards these life-threatening facts as a challenge to the ecumenical community. Unfortunately there was no opportunity for the two authors to compare and correlate their respective texts.

During the plenary session it became quite obvious that both authors had written from different perspectives and with different aims. When Bhiman speaks of "our situation" (or uses similar terminology) he is usually referring specifically to the conditions in South Africa. Although in principle the plenary was in solidarity with the liberation struggle in South Africa and agreed to the contents of the text, the participants felt that they could not make the text their own. It is the testimony of the author also as far as the "messianic role of the oppressed" is concerned.

The other part of the report, which deals with the challenge to the churches under the three concepts of the conciliar process, though not contested contributed little to the theological qualification of the concern.

The relationship between the two texts clearly shows the amount of work still needed as regards understanding whilst trying to develop a theology of just peace.

The task for the second working group was

Differences and convergences of ethical and theological criteria in the ecumenical discussion on peace and justice.

According to the second phase of the consultation an assessment of the consensus and the divergences of theologically founded positions was asked for. This included, for instance, the ethical re-



jection of weapons of mass destruction, the ban on nuclear weapons and the no to deterrence. Theological topoi and their implications for pressing socioethical questions such as the "divine gift of life" and the creation ministry, the doctrine of just war, the Sermon on the Mount with its blessedness of the poor and the peacemakers etc. were also to be taken into consideration.

The group tried to gather these diverse elements in an independent draft by conceptionally linking justification and liberation. Thus a closer connection is established between justice and peace.

This is the only group report (under the responsibility of the Canadian Lutheran R. Hordern) which was worked out by the whole group. It was read out in the final plenary session although there was not enough time to take up this interesting draft constructively. Thus it is still open how this very systematical text can be brought into harmony with the other two group reports or if individual elements could be integrated or vice versa.

#### The task

Peace and justice as part of the Christian doctrine and characteristic of the church,

which was dealt with by the second group, had originally been intended for the third. But the emphasis should be on how much the church is open to development of doctrine and the coming into being of such concepts. Many Christians and not only theologians wonder what the conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation means for the churches and groups involved, what ecclesiological demands it poses and how it can be dealt with within the ecumenical dialogue. The discussion on the term "peace council", which was dropped all too soon, pointed out the necessity of thematically dealing with ecclesiology in this connection.<sup>20</sup>

The report of the third working group is in two parts. The first, very extensive part was drawn up by the Roman Catholic theologian Heinz-Günther Stobbe. The other (V. Elements of a Theology of Just Peace) was written by the Lutheran theologian Helmut Zeddies (GDR). The authors could coordinate their contributions only just prior to the actual writing of the report. Only parts of the text were presented in the plenary, and it was not sufficiently discussed. This explains some duplication and overlapping which, however, underscores the importance attached by the group to certain statements.

## **IV. Group Reports**

### **GROUP I**

We theologians from different parts of the world - though primarily from the Northern hemisphere - heard the voice of the people involved in the struggles for peace, for justice, and for life.

We came to the conclusion that peace and justice are indivisible. There is no peace without justice. They relate to each other. Both - and moreover the whole of God's creation - are today threatened in a unique way. And the time for a turnabout is running out.

We need to look at the suffering of the people and to analyze the root causes. This includes the use of socioeconomic methods of analysis.

#### **Justice**

The gap between the rich and the poor is still widening; between the Two-Thirds World (mostly former colonies of Europe and the USA) and the North as well as within those countries. More than 40 million people die of hunger every year. More than 800 million people live below the minimum level of existence. The debt



crisis has become unbearable for the so-called developing countries. Still, they pay more to the so-called developed countries (1986 more than 30 billion US dollars) than they receive due to worsening terms of trade and an unjust world economic order.

Unjust power structures deny the political rights of people and create oppression.

We heard about the effects of racism in South Africa. The South African government, which builds on apartheid and makes war on its own people, is illegitimate.

We learned that the unjust distribution of land is one of the major problems. People become migrant workers and refugees, because they are pushed off their own land.

The church is involved: Christians came with the Bible in the one hand while robbing the land with the other.

Exploitation and oppression of the Two-Thirds World is caused by the predominant worldwide economic system, which makes profit its only goal and which always needs to intensify production and expand markets.

The main actors in this system are the transnational corporations located in Western Europe, North America and Japan. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund play the role of guarantors of this disorder.

The churches in the West are bound up in this system and benefit from it.

We saw that no peace can grow at the cost of justice. There can be no peace whilst two-thirds of the world live in poverty.

We remember the insight of the Sixth LWF Assembly that to making the necessary radical changes in the world's economic system is one essential step towards establishing and attaining peace.

## Peace

Peace is threatened by the arms race and the danger of nuclear warfare. Moreover, even local, restricted nuclear warfare would leave no more hope for the survival of humankind.

The antagonistic sociopolitical systems of the North produced the system of nuclear deterrence.

But it turned out that the security of the North is the misery of the South: The system of exploitation and oppression in the Two-Thirds World continues.

At the same time deterrence did not prevent a number of conventional wars in the North and in the South: since 1945 there have been more than 133.

## Creation

Creation is affected by human violence. One root cause of the unlimited use of violence may be found in Western thinking since Descartes and Bacon, which set humanity apart from nature and subjugated nature totally to its will and power.

This thinking no longer regarded humanity as a responsible part of creation.

Modern science and technology are still adhering to this pattern of thought. That is the root cause of the destruction of nature.

## Theological problems

### *1. The arrest of creation*

Creation, both humankind and nature, is endowed with dignity. Humankind as a concept of *imago Dei* lays emphasis on the value, worth and dignity of all human beings as persons. Our various contexts speak of the vicious brutalization and disrespect of persons.



Beyond the meaning of God-given worth, *imago Dei* implies that every person has been endowed with God-given resources to carry out the responsibility of preserving the harmony of creation: humankind and creation, humankind and humankind. Humanity is blessed with resources for the unfolding of the purpose of creation. But in our context these have been arrested.

## *2. Life and shalom*

God has endowed creation with life. The sharing of life is the demand which justice requires all of humankind to meet in human relationships. In this way justice promotes life in community (or the community of life) so that peace (*shalom*) determines our relations. This relation of community leads to the sharing of life with all of creation. Here too our context bears witness to the denial of life.

## *3. Ecumenism/unity*

Unity must serve the purpose of justice and peace. Our context testifies that the ecumenicity of the oppressed forged around the symbols of their struggle and faith exemplifies the responsibility of ecumenism for peace. For it is not a unity at the cost of justice, nor is it a false unity for it does not deny peace and justice. In our context ecumenism is reduced to spiritual fatalism because it glosses over the root causes of the North-South conflict which is the economic exploitation of the South, and the East-West conflict which is an ideological struggle threatening nuclear destruction. Ecumenism must overcome these in the striving for peace.

## *4. The Eucharist*

The Eucharist is the sacramental *locus theologicus* where Christ renews the church, thus empowering it to accept its social and ecological responsibility. But ours is a socially divided world and consequently we cannot share the Eucharist in order to renew our social relations.

## *5. Liberation*

God, the Liberator, enables the ongoing fulfillment of creation. The denial of humankind's dignity and the threat to the preser-

vation of all God's creation is grossly evident in our global context. Liberation as the struggle for justice and peace is the empowering action of God against all that denies human dignity and threatens all creation. The symbols of the liberation struggles of the peoples of the Two-Thirds World are as worthy a spiritual resource as are the confessions of the church. The theological understanding of liberation as a struggle for freedom, human rights and dignity enables the vision of a messianic role of the oppressed Two-Thirds World in contributing to overcoming the North-South and East-West conflict.

#### *6. Kingdom of God*

The kingdom of God embraces the hallmarks of justice, peace and righteousness. God's kingdom, as announced by Jesus the Messiah, is his mission or program for the establishment of justice. What we witness today is how the kingdom of God is met with resistance, even violent resistance so that efforts for justice in society are crushed. It has frequently been the case that the notion of the kingdom of God as a future reality was only appealed to when under the pressure of life-threatening situations. However, what this really means is avoiding the conflict or further intensification of the crisis that the challenge of the kingdom brings upon us. In the struggles of the Two-Thirds World people we witness an undying commitment to the realization of God's kingdom.

#### *7. Covenant*

Situations such as those which threaten life and creation are in conflict with the biblical basis for relationships, namely the covenant. The covenant calls to mind the obligation of partners in relationship to one another and the need for faithfulness in keeping this responsibility of one towards the other. In Jesus the Messiah we see God's commitment to his covenant but, at the same time, the covenant as the basis for relationships is exemplified in God's relationship with humankind through Jesus the Messiah's demand that truth and justice be the measure of relationships in covenant.



## **GROUP II**

### **Preamble (methodological considerations)**

A. We should primarily work on a statement on justice with world peace regarded as an issue that flows from justice rather than a separate kind of issue. We can only build peace as we build justice.

B. We should produce a statement that is not specifically regional but rather a statement that provides theological links between the biblical message and present-day concerns of all people. This theological link could then be adapted, as appropriate, by Christians in various contexts.

C. The statement should be specifically Christian in source. General moral or pragmatic arguments which are not specifically Christian in nature can be made by other groups. We recognize these arguments and appreciate their importance but for now we offer guidelines specific to the Christian vision of reality.

Theological basis: justification and liberation

1. We acknowledge the rule of the One God who creates, redeems, and gives life to this world. Because God is the Creator we are alarmed for injustice and the lack of peace represent a denial of the image of God which God has given to all people. We are alarmed by the threats to life itself which are found in unjust situations, including threats to human life and the world of nature.

Through Christ, the Redeemer, people are closely joined together with God's nature in an intimate way. People are joined with God as the branches on the one vine, or as different parts of one body, thus giving us a special relationship with all other people which social structures should enhance, not deny. As the giver of life God is still at work in the world, and in the church, to bring about redemption from the brokenness of human society.

2. Salvation is not a denial of this world but the fulfillment of this world, the recreation of a broken creation, infusing it with the power of love and justice and peace which God intends for people. God-given redemption consists of reconciling people to God and, therefore, to each other. Our relationship to God through justification is a relationship of justice and peace, justification and liberation, in which our alienation from God and neighbor is overcome. Reconciliation and justification with God mean justice and liberation for people. People are reconciled with their neighbors and the whole of God's creation.

Justification confirms for us that oppression and victimization are never God's will for humanity. The experience of justification allows us to participate in God's kingdom. The vision of the kingdom impels us to create signs and symbols of the kingdom to come.

God's salvation helps us to see that social divisions are not divinely ordained limits to human freedom, but are the result of human sin and alienation from God. Situations of injustice do not happen by chance nor are they the result of "blind fate". They result from a selfish will, either personal or collective. God's mercy goes out especially to the victims of injustice.

3. In the Bible, justice is understood as the right relationship between God and people, between people themselves, and between people and the whole of creation, including nature.

The Bible sees peace as the result of just relationships. When there is justice, only then is there a state of peace. In the Bible "peace" means wholeness, completeness, health, social, political and ecological harmony, security and the absence of warfare. There is no distinction between the sacred and the secular, corporate and individual manifestations: all are aspects of the peace which God intends for the world. Therefore, we cannot say there is peace when there is the temporary absence of war or revolution but, rather, we say there is no peace until first justice has



been established which, in turn, produces peace. We should not see ourselves as pursuing peace with the intention of later trying to establish justice; rather, we must begin with the problems of justice in order to work for peace.

The Christian's commitment to justice and peace is not simply a matter of actions, but also a matter of inward desire and motivation. Because of the love which God has shown towards us we fervently desire the establishment of a just world, to reconcile all people in new forms of human community. We desire a world of justice and peace not out of fear, not out of fear of our enemies, but out of love, including a love of those persons who may appear to be our enemies because of unjust social systems which divide us and because of the propagation of enemy images.

4. The Christian's ministry of reconciliation is the process of establishing the justice and liberation and peace which God intends for the world. Human sinfulness manifests itself in broken relationships. Exploitative or unjust or oppressive social structures work to keep people separated from each other and from God, and also bring about an exploitation of the world of nature. The ministry of reconciliation includes working against all unjust and oppressive structures in society. Justice, then, is established as people are reconciled and brought together in new forms of human community.

These communities are characterized by their witness to the intended harmony of justice and peace between all people. The witness occurs in specific actions of people to establish a more just world, and in the context of the new relationships that people have with each other. Human communities ought to be characterized by love for the neighbor, which means service to the neighbor, especially the neighbor who is in need. People are called to be responsive to and responsible towards other people.

Nationalism, social class, race, sex, ethnic and religious heritage are not limitations to the scope of one's responsibility towards others.

Human communities are held together by forces which create structures and stem from human interaction, such as the economy, civil laws, and cultural values. These structures represent power to bring people together in certain ways. Christians should always be working to influence the forces in society so that social systems become instruments of justice.

### **Theological bases for "peace with justice"**

5. Today military build-up is aggravating the pursuit of peace through justice. Financial and human resources devoted to militarization destroy possibilities of building a just society. Military systems alienate people by keeping them separate, denying them freedom, or maintaining an unjust distribution of wealth and resources, and denying them basic human rights, such as work and food. Thus the increase in the military and the threat of war is a symptom of the underlying injustices in society. The problem of "war and peace" is, actually, a problem of justice. The arms race kills even without war!

We do not feel that war is simply a matter of international conflict or internal revolution. Torture, child abuse, the mistreatment of prisoners, racism, sexism, and religious persecution are all, in essence, states of war which exist within and between societies.

6. The very existence of weapons of mass destruction is an attack upon God and God's creation. Weapons of war are a denial of the dignity which all people have by virtue of being created in the image of God.

7. Security is not a matter of possessing weapons, but a matter of being in a good relationship with other people, both within and beyond our national borders. We should not seek "national security" but a "common security" for all nations, for God's whole earth.

8. Military strength should not be confused with God's power in the world. The power of God is not measured by such human standards but through solidarity with the victims of oppression.



The starting point for God's power of justice and peace is to bring about reconciliation in the world through the crucified Christ.

9. The spirit, logic, and the practice of the military strategy of deterrence is totally opposed to Christian discipleship as a life pursuing justice and peace through love and reconciliation.

10. It is possible to establish a superficial appearance of unity that merely disguises the injustices upon which that unity is based. This applies to human societies and also to the church. If unity is achieved without justice a greater injustice will result.

11. Whether or not all war can be removed from history, our calling as Christians is to continue to be a light to all nations showing on the path of justice which leads to peace. We must be strengthened daily by God to work for justice and the elimination of all weapons of war from this earth. We reject the pessimism which decrees that war is inevitable and that therefore we can do nothing to work towards peace. War was not created by God but by human societies and, therefore, human societies have the power to seek other methods of resolving disputes.

## **GROUP III**

### **I. Commonalities and differences in church statements**

1. The presentation and discussion of the various church documents have shown us that there is today indeed a basic common premise for the discussion of and thoughts on peace and justice, which is the following: the churches perceive that human life as well as all other forms of life on earth are threatened by (self-)destruction and they share the conviction that this threat is most evident within the realms of justice, peace and ecology. On the whole, the churches further agree that in view of this threatening predicament they themselves have failed to meet adequately their own and special responsibility towards the state and society at large. It is the realization of just how dangerous

and urgent the world's predicament in fact is, as well as the recognition of their own failure which obliges the churches to make a clear statement in which they acknowledge to both themselves and the world their responsibility with respect to the international state of affairs. Such a statement needs to point out the obligations and possibilities for action open to Christians and the churches in order to take a stand on these issues.

2. At the same time, however, significant discrepancies become evident with regard to the words and actions of the churches. We have observed that the various churches have their own specific ways of reflecting upon the problems in hand whereby the denominational traditions play a considerable role. Furthermore they do not arrive at the same conclusions in every case. There is, however, another factor which must not be ignored: the churches in the Northern hemisphere on the one hand and the churches in the South, on the other, emphasize different aspects of the relationship of peace and justice; this difference is essentially due to the respective context of the churches' stance and theological reflection.

The churches of the North focus primarily upon the issue of effective strategies to prevent war, because they fear that a military confrontation between the highly armed states of the Northern hemisphere would endanger the entire human race and all life on this planet. Furthermore, they note that the actual costs of the policies of deterrence and the arms race are already causing intolerable damage to the countries of the South and considerably straining the economies of the Northern nations.

The churches in the Southern hemisphere on the other hand are emphasizing the widespread injustice prevalent in most Southern countries as well as the economic relations between the Northern and Southern hemisphere, and they fear that the struggle for peace and disarmament could mean that the the issue of justice and the absolute necessity for fundamental changes in society and the church might be neglected or even abandoned. Thus, the



churches in the Southern hemisphere feel that in this case the struggle for peace and disarmament would help cement the existing injustices, and there are indeed reasons that justify this suspicion.

3. Finally we feel that we have learned through our discussion that the different approaches to the topic of peace and justice in society definitely affect the way these two central concepts are perceived by any given party and that it also raises important questions as to the suitability of the term "just peace".

It is evident that discussing peace issues, like issues of church unity, in the South often appears dubious. In that context it often acquires a fatal ideological function in that it can, and often does, serve to conceal the existing conflicts, for instance between a people and their government, or economic and racial inequalities. This situation is often aggravated by the fact that governments and even the churches themselves are quite frequently primarily responsible for the existence and maintaining of such conflicts and institutional inequality and - in the true sense of the word - benefit from them. Thus the churches of the South are justified in pointing out that focusing on the issues of the prevention of war and the securing of peace once runs the risk of being to the disadvantage and at the expense of the poor and oppressed in the Southern hemisphere.

4. It is in view of this fear that the expression "just peace" takes on above all the function of a critical corrective intended to act as a reminder that conflicts need to be discussed and settled and that the structures of economic and racial exploitation and repression must be eliminated before one can speak of true peace.

5. Our group has no reservations about endorsing the results of the discussion which have been briefly presented here, but would like to bring a few additional aspects into the discussion which could help advance our work.

5.1 We consider it important to point out that the interpretation of the terms of "peace" and "justice", and their relationship to each other does indeed in some respects vary within the context

of the East-West conflict and that the very terms themselves are occasionally misused, and the commonalities of the two positions merely feigned. Not least, the term "just peace" is in danger - although in a different way - of being used for ideological purposes. One must therefore ensure that the term serves the goal of establishing a uniform definition of the concept of peace which we all consider indispensable. Under these circumstances, we nonetheless advocate the continued use of this term, although we are aware of the fact that in terms of biblical tradition and Christian socioethics the concept of peace has actually always included the imperative of justice.

5.2. We also wish to stress the fact that the interdependence between the prevention of war on the one hand and justice on the other in society prohibits the construction of false alternatives. Quite on the contrary, we are convinced that this situation urges us to learn from one another by sharing our experiences and thus identifying with increased clarity the relationships amongst the problems at hand. If for this reason the churches of the Northern hemisphere are rather assertive in presenting their views, this is in no way intended to patronize the representatives of the churches in the Southern hemisphere or to educate them with an air of condescension but, rather, they do so because they believe that this is the only way in which a complete picture of reality can develop in which the churches can formulate a relevant position and establish coordinated action. Our common goal is and will remain as follows: peace and justice everywhere and for everyone.

## II. The role of biblical arguments within the theology of just peace

1. With gratitude we have become aware of the fact that all documents which we have dealt with have more or less referred to, or based their argumentation upon, the Bible. This in itself is of an ecumenical value that must not be underestimated.
2. Nevertheless we consider it necessary to question the use of the Bible as resource material. This is especially true in the light



of the fact that the majority of the churches reject the view that the Scriptures contain direct instructions for political action in present times. Inevitably this leads us to the question of how a link between the biblical witness on the one hand and the reality of today's society and the demands of Christianity and the churches' action on the other can be established. Ultimately we must ask how we ourselves can evaluate the results of our analyses, i.e., what criteria we should follow in this respect.

3. However, we must not allow such difficulties to lead us to disregard the two very important facts below.

3.1 All documents clearly conclude from the biblical witness that God wishes peace and justice in and for his creation, and, therefore, to obey God's will can only mean to advocate peace and justice.

3.2. It is evident that all the documents agree that the biblical terms and synonyms for "justice" and "peace" implicitly determine the way in which society perceives peace and justice and that they thus indirectly include a political meaning.

4. Furthermore, we wish to complement these results with a few thoughts of our own which primarily concern the mission and the methodology of a theology of just peace.

4.1. It appears to be quite clear that the biblical witness somewhat like our discussion does not demonstrate uniformity, but rather identifies a variety of aspects and diverse emphases relating to a given topic. Biblical witness, in other words, is evidently composed of many different testimonies that derive from various contexts. We believe that every attempt to interpret the biblical witness in today's terms must recognize and respect this diversity if only to avoid making choices based merely on subjective interests.

4.2. Nevertheless, one must at the same time accept the task of probing for the unity and the core of the biblical witness and to consider how we can determine its center. Therefore, to preserve the above-mentioned diversity of the biblical witness can only

mean to analyze in turn the central message of the Bible whilst taking into account the various contexts of interpretation. As a consequence, the theology of just peace is also confronted with the extremely difficult problem of the hermeneutical circle.

5. In order to facilitate an understanding of the gospel, the Bible illustrates with a rich abundance of examples the central meaning of peace and justice, as for instance the depiction of Paradise, the parables of the kingdom of God, the Sermon on the Mount, the Pauline epistles and their view of the church, etc. We believe, that our church traditions have not always attached enough importance to this fundamental perspective and that therefore it must both in theological and practical terms be assigned a position of renewed and increased emphasis.

6. It is in this very respect that the dialogue among the representatives of different denominations has been exceptionally fruitful. Especially the stance of Orthodox theology as regards creation has stimulated a great deal of thought on our part, primarily because it focuses from the outset on the issue of ecology and because an anthropocentric bottleneck has been avoided right from the beginning. Furthermore we learn from this stance how to understand more comprehensively the longing of all human beings for peace and justice, how to honor it and how to have confidence in it as a solid foundation for cooperation. The more christocentric perspective, as advocated by the churches of the Reformation, is in no way opposed to this view. By confessing Christ, the church testifies that God in Jesus Christ has made peace between himself and humans, and has thereby opened up a new possibility to comply in faith, hope and love with that longing for peace and justice which reveals to all people of good will the will of their Creator. Roman Catholic theology has reminded us that the church cannot and may not be content to simply proclaim the justice God granted us and his gift for peace in the world but, rather, that simultaneously with its verbal proclamation it must carry out its proclamation by way of actions and



deeds and its visible form, lest it belies its proclamation. Likewise with regard to the credibility of the churches' word, its aim of making church decisions binding deserves special attention.

We have thus learned that ecumenical dialogue enriches us, but also that it confronts us with the challenge of critically scrutinizing our denominational traditions.

### III. The mission of a theology of peace

1. It has already been mentioned that the hermeneutic task of a theology of just peace leads to the problem of the variety of contexts. This may be indisputable, but in our judgment this very premise gives rise to the contrary task of making a contribution towards the integration of the various contexts. This could be achieved if this theology of just peace were to work out a conceptual framework, which would, if not enable, at least promote mutual understanding and thereby ultimately serve to coordinate the actions of the churches in various contexts.

2. In our opinion, a further task of the theology of just peace consists of exposing those false gods whose worship hinders a peaceful and just coexistence of all people. In principle this can apply to all created realities, and characteristics and values, yet with regard to the concrete state of global society we consider it a priority to subject the idolization of national security, profit and property, personal freedom and ethnic origin to strong theological criticism.

3. We are well aware of the fact that above all there is a need for a positive development of the theology of just peace. Although no detailed model is available at this stage it is by no means necessary to begin from scratch; rather, it is perfectly acceptable to adopt certain traditions or traditional elements. We feel that a revised doctrine on the duties of the state as ordained by God, which must be adapted to the altered conditions of international politics, is of utmost importance.

#### IV. Substantiation

1. Summing up the churches' doctrinal documents clearly illustrates that it is not only the fundamental attitude of the churches regarding peace and justice which has changed, or is gradually changing, but that in certain areas remarkable tendencies towards the establishment of an ecumenical consensus can be observed. The fact that an ever-increasing wave of doubt as to the validity of the premise of the policy of deterrence is materializing cannot be ignored, and a number of churches already reject it definitively and unconditionally. Even those churches which arrive at another position tolerate it only temporarily and under very severe restrictions.

2. The fact that clearly different types of argumentation lead to the same or similar results deserves special attention. No general consensus could be reached on how much validity could still be attributed to the traditional doctrine of just war. The overwhelming majority considers the doctrine useless, even dangerous, whilst its supporters maintain that it is still a useful instrument for forming moral judgments. However, even its defenders stress the necessity of emphatically bringing to attention its extremely limited function as an aid in decision-making when facing dilemmas which call for a choice between two evils. The acceptance of the just war doctrine must not mislead people into playing down the moral evil of war nor may the priority given to non-violence as observed in the Scriptures be neglected in this way. The group therefore unanimously advocates that the church's witness to, and its traditions of, non-violence be emphasized much more strongly than has been the case in the churches - with the exception of the peace churches - throughout history. In all other respects, the concept of just war should be dropped altogether and be replaced by that of just defense. Finally, it is of utmost importance that extreme care be taken to assure that all considerations of the possibilities of just defense take place parallel to, and be contained within, the intensive and creative quest for possibilities for a positive peace policy.



3. A number of issues such as the question of the *status confessionis* were touched upon but not discussed any further. Also the problems of church structures were treated superficially only. The group did, however, unanimously agree that ecumenicity is an integral part of the churches' testimony of peace and justice, and that it sustains this testimony's effectiveness and credibility. The group furthermore deems it appropriate to make clear that the unity of the church demands a willingness on the part of the various denominations to pay a considerable price and it found both encouragement and comfort in the fact that after all, God himself sacrificed his son in order to unite us with him.

#### V. Elements of a theology of just peace

1. We consider the task of a theology of just peace to be one of examining the variety and diversity of the biblical tradition in order to identify its essential core as well as the special properties that arise from this core and can be traced back to it. Theology interprets the biblical witness for all human beings in their respective context by taking into consideration present-day realities and discussing them thoroughly. It determines the stances that are to inform Christian witness and ministry and on the basis of which their efforts for peace and justice can be coordinated. Today, theology can only carry out this both hermeneutic and directive task by being ecumenical and contextual. It will fail if it is expected to serve as *ex post facto* legitimization of ethical actions or political decisions.

2. Since it was God himself who brought peace and justice to the world, we know that it is this he wishes for all people. Peace and justice, therefore, belong to the very core of faith and of the proclamation of the gospel. In its proclamation and its theology the church has the duty to develop, to update and prevent any misinterpretation of the relationship of God's peace and justice to the peace and justice which humanity requires for survival. Since the church is the body of Christ and the sign of the coming kingdom its teachings and its actions must bear witness to the fact

that the life of the church depends on God's peace and justice to which it owes its existence. The church can only bring about peace and justice in society if God's peace and justice are realized within the church itself.

3. There is no proper tradition of peace in Lutheran churches. This is what distinguishes them from other churches which rely on the doctrine of just war or on pacifism as an ethic of non-violence. "War is contrary to the will of God." Today, this declaration of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 is universally accepted in ecumenical circles. Nevertheless, Lutheran churches still seriously lack a foundation upon which their own theology of peace can be based and developed. However, there are some beginnings.

Owing to their Reformatory approach which lets God be God, the Protestant churches have always tended to use prophetic language to expose incorrect human behavior whenever such behavior becomes idolatry as humans seek to put themselves in God's position. The Barmen Theological Declaration set an example that is still valid today. Whenever people think that almost any sacrifice is justified to support their political, economic and military power, theology is obliged to unmask these false gods. This has been done in the case of racism (by the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches), in the case of the ideology of national security (by the United Methodist Council of Bishops) and in the case of the policy of deterrence (by the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR).

4. The theory of just war also appears in the teachings of the Lutheran churches. It is evident in Article 16 of the Augsburg Confession which states that Christians may without sin engage in just wars. The original purpose of the doctrine of just war was to promote peace by regarding war as legitimate only under special circumstances. Considering the circumstances, a nuclear war is not permissible. In pointing this out, the doctrine of just war at the same time makes it clear that in the light of the existence of nuclear weapons of mass destruction it has become useless as a theoretical model for the securing of peace.



This certainly has repercussions for the understanding of CA 16. God's "good order" compels us today to peace, justice and the integrity of creation. Weapons of mass destruction are against God's Word and commandment. Human beings have no right to destroy creation. In view of the immense nuclear arms build-up the question no longer is whether and when war can be justified, but simply how it can be avoided. But there can be no peace in the world unless there is justice for all.

5. It is in this sense that we speak of a "just peace". Yet, we are aware of the fact that this term is too ambiguous to replace that of "just war". It simply indicates that the conception of peace in itself is not sufficiently clear to prevent misuse to the effect that there could be peace without justice, which would provide security for some and thereby perpetuate structural injustice for others. Thus we emphasize the indispensable interdependence of peace and justice: Peace comes only through justice, and there can be justice only through peace.

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## **V. Interpretation of the group reports**

1. Under the heading "theological problems" the first group report, whilst integrating the threatening facts into the conceptual framework of the conciliar process, incorporates biblical signs of hope to counteract negative experiences. At the same time it contains a fair amount of criticism and even accusations.

All that Lutheran theology tried to keep apart by means of the two kingdoms doctrine - social tensions and harmony in the church, is linked here with defiant formulations. It reflects the bitter disappointment of the theologian from the Two-Thirds World at the spiritual arrogance and alienation of many theologians and "Northern churches". I am personally struck and therefore hesitate to apply to this text the yardstick of my academically gained theological critique. I am reluctant to speak

about the "messianic role" of the poor and oppressed or to interpret the Eucharist simply from a social or ecological perspective. However, I do recognize that these somewhat provocative statements present a challenge to my acquired theological thinking, which I cannot spurn. I would like to illustrate this with two examples.

a) In some church institutions the freedom of theological opinion is impaired by the fear that clear statements on peace and justice would lead to new divisions in the church. This is especially true of those churches that regard themselves as "folk churches". According to Wolfgang Huber, "the question concerning the strategies of action by the church ... versus the question concerning the point of departure of the function of their action" has made itself independent.<sup>21</sup> Political decisions ("even those that concern matters of life and death") are isolated from questions regarding confession.<sup>22</sup> Even where the theological position would lead to resolute statements, these are sometimes limited to verbal manifestations. Following the conference in Harare in July 1986, the EKD deemed "special and calculated sanctions" to be imposed upon South Africa "as an absolute necessity". However, so far it has not acted accordingly.<sup>23</sup>

This is how ecumenical solidarity is being minimalized. It is no secret that the churches of the South are more and more disappointed with the ecumenical strategies of the North. To achieve ecumenical communion in the future, it is vital that the differences in the teachings of the past be dealt with. They constitute an unwanted burden for the younger churches of the South reminding them of the tutelage of competing missions, from which they are increasingly liberating themselves. All the more they would like to understand oikumene to be a solidarity of Christian love for one another which does not wear itself out in disputes over another doctrine but is expressed in joint action against oppression, misery and the destruction of creation.

Seen from this perspective the criticism leveled against the "spiritual fatalism" of the ecumenical movement is understandable. The major confessional churches are in fact deceiving themselves



if they continue to assume that their members primarily receive and accept their respective doctrines. In reality the confessional boundaries cut right across the churches. The ecumenical vision of unity depends very much upon how the churches and their members react to the important questions affecting humanity. Only if the doctrine of the church is also politically relevant, will it also in future be of interest and importance to humanity. A spiritual neutrality on these issues can neither be justified theologically nor is it ecumenically helpful.

b) With the possible exception of the Community of Friends/Quakers, the Eucharist is of central importance in all Christian churches. Even before the coming into being of the doctrine of the Eucharist Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper together. The act itself precedes reflection not only historically. Whatever we think and teach about the Eucharist - it pales compared to what we experience during the actual event.

This is not the time nor the place to embark upon a discussion on the Eucharist. What we are concerned with here is the function and effect of the Eucharist for the existence of the church as a community of believers, (*communio sanctorum*). The group report reminds us that the Eucharist besides its ecclesial function also has a social one. It is not pure coincidence that the LWF statement on "Southern Africa: Confessional Integrity" refers to all brothers and sisters "at the table of the Lord".<sup>24</sup> This does not allow for any social, societal, racial or indeed any other barriers that may impede this community. What does it mean for the church outside of this brief community at the Lord's table. If the Eucharist is not on the periphery of ecclesiastical life but rather its very center - as stated by theology - then the constant renewal of the church as a social entity has to spring from here. At least fragments of what we experience during the Eucharist will have to be realized in the life of the church. Therefore I would tend towards reversing the following sentence: "but ours is a socially divided world and consequently we cannot share the

Eucharist so that social relationships are renewed." Since the Eucharist allows us to put our social relationships into a new order, it is our task, for which we have also been empowered, to change them in society as well as the church towards more justice and peace.

2. Whilst the first group report shows definite contextual and subjective trends, the second aims at building a bridge between the biblical witness and the concerns of today's humanity. Here, the whole of humanity constitutes the context, which makes certain generalizations unavoidable. What lies behind this is an assumption that makes good sense, namely theology cannot survive without certain abstractions, thus enabling it to be equally received in different context but at the same time being expressed in concrete realities.

The report tries to develop a theology of just peace on the basis of the classic Protestant doctrine - justification. On first sight this may seem to contradict the ecumenical concern. Yet if Harding Meyer's opinion is correct, namely, "that the central concern of the sixteenth-century reformation, which from the very beginnings was orientated towards ecumenicity and not particular churches, is increasingly being heard and received by the whole church in the process of today's ecumenical dialogue"<sup>25</sup> then this objection appears to be unfounded. Nevertheless the ecumenicity of our approach to this question needs to be given greater emphasis than it does in the text.

The report avoids one Protestant trap by interpreting justification as liberation right from the very start. In addition it views justification from the perspective of the history of salvation in which both eschatology and the theology of creation play equal parts. Yet, Orthodoxy's approach with regard to the holy gift of life needs to be emphasized more strongly .

The theological argument still has a strongly idealized character which without doubt corresponds to "occidental" theological tradition. What is neglected though is the self-critical analysis of theology's legitimate claim and the reality of the church. It seems to me to be increasingly impossible to speak of a theology



of just peace without addressing the omissions, the mistakes that Christians have committed in this area. I am not speaking of the controversial and highly delicate theological question whether the church as such can err but rather of admitting guilt with regard the victims of the church's adaptation to the triumphalistic powers of the world. Even a "pure doctrine" does not protect us from guilt.

Point 11 of the report could be set at the beginning of the report as a kind of "confession." It is further explicated in theological reflections upon justification and liberation. This is vital, since the theological error still stands according to which "war and the fear of war will to the end of history remain consequences of wrathful God's judgment over an unrepentant humanity."<sup>26</sup>

Under points 5-10 the text includes positions that today seem to be essential for the churches in view of a justification understood as being liberating. They can also be regarded as the consensus of the consultation as is confirmed by the report of the third working group.

3. The third group report reflects most strongly the ecumenical dimension of the subject and the tensions that arose as a result of the confessionally and contextually different views of the problem. If a theology of just peace is to be understood as an ecumenical task (and how could it be understood otherwise) it will have to withstand these tensions and deal with them constructively.

In contrast to the second group report the third tries to identify the commonalties and differences. Thus it limits itself to dealing with problems rather than attempting to formulate a definite theological concept. It is more precise in taking up the different confessional inputs, and thus meets the ecumenical interest to a larger degree. This very much conforms to the debates at the consultation. The approach of the second groups report based on justification theology was not explicitly discussed in the plenary.

In my opinion it is vital to clarify what one really means by the thematic construct of "A Theology of Just Peace" and what its limits are. This was done in the methodological preamble of the second group report. It has the advantage of defining a certain level of cognizance in precise sentences that have a systematic relation to each other and which were adopted by the participants. This is also confirmed by the explanation of the contents in the third group report (especially V.5).

A continuation of the ecumenical discussion would have to take up and deepen especially the problems raised in II.6. Learning from other church traditions is decisive for the conciliar process (JPIC). Here the question of how the individual churches develop their doctrinal and confessional traditions as well as the different reception processes play a role.<sup>27</sup> This is to say that the ecclesiological dimension of the JPIC process needs to be much more in the foreground and must be further reflected upon. A prerequisite for this is the self critical examination of the self-understanding of the church of the *ecclesia universalis* (universal church). We will look into this further in the next part.

## **VI. Preliminary findings**

I feel that the last paragraph of the second working group - as already mentioned above - formulates sufficiently clearly the ecumenical approach to a theology of just peace. In a few sentences "Good News" against war and justice is addressed. Not as a law which puts a burden on Christians and demands achievements. Not as an ideology which wants to leave its mark on reality and convert humanity to one single truth. Nobody is compelled to believe in the ultimate rejection of war if he/she follows the call of Christ on the road to justice which always contributes to peace. That this road is a stony one needs not be mentioned here. Only those who are daily uplifted and comforted by God will be able to bear the hardships, setbacks and failures. It is therefore essential to resist the temptation of pessimism and not to adhere to the erroneous belief that the bad things in this world are God's will and doing. This is where Christian witness is needed.



Confessing God's reconciling love in Christ means the rejection of the false gods of military security and economic profit. To deny these ideological gods the Christian legitimation still does not mean that they are destroyed. However it does mean that we take away the power that they have over us.

Certain beginnings to this confessing are examined under point V.3 in the third group report. The individual churches have varying views on what form such "confessions" actually take, how they are formulated and received. "Confessio" is not a key notion. In the case of the Roman Catholic Church these statements are lodged in Christian teaching, whilst the Orthodox churches link it to the paternalistic tradition. Protestants might refer to the model of the Barmen Theological Declaration. In any case the value of such statements is linked to their binding reception by the believers.<sup>28</sup> It does not depend on how such reception is achieved, but rather that it is actually aimed at and seriously promoted. This is "not simply a matter of theoretical understanding of, or assent to the teachings of the church it is a matter how we live together in this world, how the teachings which we confess take on flesh and blood in our daily life in community. That in fact is the real meaning of confessing."<sup>29</sup>

The reflections on biblical hermeneutics are closely linked to the problem of the reception of the church's witness for peace and justice. It is true for all churches - even if the accents are set differently - that all teachings and confessions must be verified by the biblical witness. This however does not guarantee that at all times and in all situations the whole wealth and diversity of the biblical message come into their own. A number of biblical truths have long been dormant until current events led to their rediscovery and they were subsequently further developed and finally incorporated into the tradition of the church. We all agreed that this applies to the many facets of the biblical message on peace and justice. Hence if we today underscore and further develop this important aspect of the biblical witness, we are not adding anything but are trying to correct in an ecumenical spirit, an omission of our traditions of faith. We are not

aiming at a uniform teaching. Suffice it that we recognize (see third group report II.3) that the biblical notions and synonyms for justice and peace are sure to indirectly have a corresponding ethos (ethical values) and therefore also political significance encouraging Christians to corresponding action in their societies. Nevertheless this is only possible if this realization becomes an element of the teaching and preaching of the church - that is to say a constitutive element of the actual being of the church.

In view of the theological line of argument some basic questions still need to be clarified. When discussing hermeneutical problems we unanimously agreed that it does not suffice to use quotations from the Bible. In theological support of an ecumenical peace ethic, a systematic focus on the place of ethics in ecclesiology as such is necessary. In his essay on the ecclesiological dimension of ethics, Hans M. Barth has developed a clear typology which can stimulate ecumenical dialogue.<sup>30</sup> He establishes that ethos and church interact mutually, in other words, that there are no consecutive implications between ethics and ecclesiology. Christian ethics are neither the *result* of the existence of the church, nor is a special set of ethics the *prerequisite* for the existence of the church. Wherever there is the church there is also an ethical potential which we shall now discuss.

Without once again referring to CA VII it can be stated that the church is manifest through the unity of Word and sacrament. It is a matter of ecclesial processes in which time and time again the church comes into being. We are not concerned with particular theological reflections and distinctions which are being undertaken in Word and sacrament. For the relationship of the church and the Christian ethos it is vital that something actually "happens" in baptism, Eucharist and the proclamation of the Word. In baptism it is the promise of new life and the rejection of the forces of death that are in the foreground. In the Eucharist we experience the community in Christ as liberation from the effects of sin that divide us. In the proclamation of the Word of God we experience the promise of salvation as the gospel and the call for repentance and change as the law.



All these ecclesial acts have an eminent ethical meaning. Ethical arguments vary depending on which of the three acts is emphasized. If we consider the starting point to be in baptism, then what is dominant is the differentiation of the sacred and the profane, the permitted and not permitted as well as the rejection of corruptive powers. This entails the danger of casuistic legalism or juridical ethics. If the celebration of the Eucharist is placed at the core of ecclesial identity, then the communicative nature of the community, the overcoming of social contrasts and the reconciling healing of human suffering is at the heart of the ethical orientation. This gives rise to the danger of a liturgical transfiguration of the ethical or a defeatist acceptance of real tensions for the sake of spiritual harmony. If the understanding of the church concentrates on kerygma the appelative and prophetic traits of Christian ethics will be decisive. The danger here is that a simply proclamatory ethic is given priority.

To assign merits and dangers to specific confessions is not difficult. Despite a crass oversimplification the first type might be classed with the Roman Catholic, the second with the Orthodox, and the third with the Protestant model of the church. However, in order to avoid any impression of being polemic might I add that this typology is only of heuristic value if at the same time it has an ecumenical orientation. None of the large churches would want to see their self-understanding be reduced to one of the sacraments or the proclamation of the word. It is for this reason that each church will also perceive and accept elements belonging to the other types.

This typology clarifies two things: first of all it explains to a certain extent, the various different approaches to Christian ethics on the basis of the church's self-understanding. Secondly it makes the ecumenical discussion of our subject easier since for an ethical orientation it draws on both the differences and unity of the comprehension of the ecclesial understanding. Let me as an example point out that the rejection of the spirit, logic and

practice of deterrence by the Protestant churches of the GDR tends to be assigned to the first model, which surely is the reason for the critical reflection on this subject by the Lutheran theologian Helmut Zeddies.

The ecumenical task for the conciliar process resulting from this is the reflection on the ethical demands seen in the light of the churchliness of the church. We agreed unanimously that a theological critique of the idolatry of ideological positions (national security, profit, race) is needed and must be developed and practiced on the basis of the very nature of the church. This invalidates the fear of many that by formulating a theology of just peace the church would interfere in matters of state. Admittedly its self-understanding involves the duty to remind the state of its responsibilities as willed by God. This can only succeed if the ecclesial existence and ethical orientation form an ecumenical unity.

"By accepting a Christian responsibility for the world, i.e., social ethics and political ethics as aspects of an ecumenical theology, we are not concerned with models of a perfect society, but with the concrete and social witness of the church, the practice of ecumenical solidarity in the struggle for justice and peace."<sup>31</sup>

Seen from this perspective the discussion of the doctrine of just war becomes more relative. It takes on the function of an auxiliary construct which can be useful for concrete decisions but has no dogmatic quality whatsoever. When we come to pacifism things are slightly different. Despite contrary historical facts there is today presumably no theological trend that would claim that acts of violence against people can be deduced from the self-understanding of the church. It is the application of these findings to a secular society that causes difficulties. Absolute pacifism calls for a willingness to suffer which no one can impose on anybody else. A number of Christian pacifists have paid for this admirable ethical attitude by dying as martyrs. They should always be present in the "cloud of witnesses" of the church but must not be used as a yardstick for ecumenical peace ethics. An



ecumenical theology of just peace must not delegitimize the struggle for justice, which in the "as yet unredeemed world" (Barmen 5) should be avoided forcefully. Yet it will always prefer non-violence and - wherever possible - sponsor the reduction of violence.

On the basis of the *notae ecclesiae* being constitutive acts of the church the individual "elements of a theology of just peace" could gain a systematic unity in the self-understanding of the churches. This would also apply to the connection between justification and liberation, which is not only anchored in the teachings of the church but also in its form. Unfortunately the relationship of doctrine and structures of the church, which is of vital importance to our subject, was not sufficiently dealt with at the consultation.

On the whole the political consequences were less controversial than the theological questions. The rejection of deterrence could be seen as being a paradigm for denying certain political and ideological points of view of their legitimacy. In order to expose and to dismiss idolatry a political analysis is necessary, which today calls for the exchange of regional perspectives. Ecumenism is not only the rapprochement of theological traditions. It demands solidarity with the conflicts of the locally or socially marginalized. In our ecumenical efforts we must try to find the common root of these regionally varying conflicts. This will facilitate the allocation of regionally different strategies and priorities to a uniform ethical judgment.

## VII. Further reflections

Jürgen Moltmann states that "the commitment to disarmament and peace is relatively slight in the churches of the Third World".<sup>32</sup> In order to explain this he quotes Allan Boesak who said that his compatriots knew indeed what hunger meant, but that the word "atom" was unknown. This is a sad reality which not only says something about poverty and injustice, but also

about the state of emergency in terms of education and information. Irrespective of knowledge or ignorance regarding the technical details and personal interest, the nuclear threat is the Sword of Damocles hanging over the whole of humanity. The starving masses must not be blamed for considering their own daily problem of survival as being more important than an invisible and incomprehensible nuclear disaster. However, this does not weaken the real danger. Christians of the North cannot simply accept the fact that their brothers and sisters in the South are not interested in this problems. They have to do their utmost to ensure that they become aware of the fact that the problem concerns them. The reproach that the peace movements of the North simply ignore the suffering of the South and merely amount to a new variation on the *pax romana*, cannot remain unchallenged.

On the other hand there is still much helplessness in the approaches to a theology of just peace as regards the relationship of justice and peace. That they belong together has been emphasized many a time. But how this unity can be described both theologically and ethically has until now not become clear. "We are still missing the theological framework for developing a common theology for justice and peace" writes Moltmann.<sup>33</sup> Certain beginnings can however be discerned and these can be developed further. The findings of this consultation might at least help define the framework for continued work.

1. A theology of just peace will have to begin with a self-critical analysis of the church's failures and theological neglects. Seen under this aspect the first part of the first report might possibly lose its accusatory tone and be seen as describing the concrete context of a necessary change. The state of today's world with the threat of nuclear destruction, flagrant economic disparities and the destabilization of the ecology is in the broadest sense the result of the misorientation of the powers that be. This includes the large churches, even when they do not possess direct political



power. Wherever they did not agree with the political, ideological, ecumenical or military aims, they are liable to be blamed for not having resisted effectively.

2. Thus for the churches of the North the theology of just peace is in the first place a theology of liberation in the sense of the necessary self-knowledge and self-correction. Essentially we are concerned with the discrepancy between doctrine and life, which we do not wish to denounce in a moral sense, but which, ecclesiologically speaking, needs to be overcome. Only if the socio-theological components of the so-called *notae ecclesiae* are recognized as being constitutive elements of the churches, the theological challenge of justice and peace will be perceived correctly.

3. Under this aspect the present division of the churches is to be seen as an impediment and contradiction to a theology of just peace. On the other hand it does provide the opportunity of ecumenically enriching and deepening the cause.

The division of the churches is a flagrant contradiction of the *ecclesia universalis* and does not have to be explicitly illustrated. Doubtless it has contributed to the church's message on peace and justice to the world sometimes lacking credibility. C.F. von Weizsäcker rightly wrote: "As requirement for a common theology of peace, peace within theology becomes possible and necessary, a reconciliation of theological convictions which in former times for good reasons were to be irreconcilable."<sup>34</sup>

I see the chance for such a reconciliation much less in intellectual agreement than in the renewed ecumenical existence of the church as such. Theological theories are always the *ex post facto* reflections and rationalizations of the church's existence in a certain context. The disadvantage is that they do not carry with them the context of their beginnings. If on the other hand they are understood as being the contextual response to specific historical, cultural or political situations, with which the church was and is confronted, then these theological thinking patterns include a rich treasure of church heritage which would benefit rather than hinder the ecumenical debate.

4. In this context the *notae ecclesiae* are to be seen as being constitutive marks of the church and not as theorems. As shown by the typology outlined above the large churches have attached varying degrees of importance to these constitutive elements and developed them differently, without ever questioning their unity. Every possible theological approach to our subject can be found in sermon, baptism and Eucharist (this is not the place to go into detail about the ministry of the church). Here the creed has its ecclesial place, without being reduced to spiritual speculation. The socioethical implications are not the result of a theory on the church, but of ecclesial acts. For example let me point out that the question of military service for Christians was linked to baptism at the synod in Arles, which however does not mean that it is inconsistent with the contextual challenge evidenced by the Constantinian edict.<sup>35</sup> Rather it shows how baptism for example as elementary prerequisite of the existence of the church needs to be tested and theologically explained in the light of certain political constellations and its socioethical implication.

5. Hence, if in this sense the necessity and basic structure of a theology of just peace are derived from the *notae ecclesiae*, then the theological thinking patterns (as for example the doctrine of justification, liberation theology, the just war doctrine or Christian pacifism) regain their context specific classification. They are no longer exclusive, but can be used as aids to understand specific situations of the church's existence. Even a theology of just peace can only make reflections that have to do with context and thus they will vary according to whether the perspective is that of a South African Black Christian or a North American Lutheran. But this does not exclude that on the basis of a common ecclesial existence they complement each other. It is not in the least surprising that most of the theologians from the Southern hemisphere give preference to justice over the securing of peace, whilst on the other hand the theologians from the rich North regard nuclear weapons as being the most dangerous threat to God's creation. The reasons for this cannot be in a so-called correct or incorrect theology, but have to do with the contextual component of their theological reflection. If we refrain



from accusing each other of betraying the the biblical witness, the emphasis of the dialogue is shifted and gains an ecumenical dimension. Thus, by mutual acceptance of the necessary specification of theology according to its contexts the complimentary and subsidiary character of theological particularities manifest themselves and become fruitful.

6. Much the same can be said *mutatis mutandis* of theological traditions that so far have been regarded as being ecumenically controversial. Seen from the perspective of ecclesial foundations, the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and different Protestant traditions supply valuable contributions, which in every case have been reduced to specific elements, and which much enrich the others. It is only the unusual and the unknown element in these theological specifications which makes the acceptance more difficult.

As regards the different doctrinal traditions, they lose their divisive effect as soon as the theological partners accept without resentment the ecclesial existence on which they are based. Here the "classical" ecumenical challenge meets with the demands made of an ecumenical theology of peace and it is at this point that I still see the biggest obstacles. All efforts towards a common doctrine remain unsatisfactory unless we manage to express peace with justice in the ecumenical shape of the church so that the world can not overlook it (a variation on what Bonhoeffer says - that the world cannot overhear it).<sup>36</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 *Budapest 1984, "In Christ - Hope for the World", Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly, LWF Report Nos 19/20, p. 251 (13.1.2)*
- 2 "To engage member churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to justice, peace and the integrity of all creation should be a priority for World Council programmes", in *Gathered for Life: Official Report of the VIth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Vancouver, 1983*, ed. David Gill, p. 255
- 3 *Budapest 1984*, note 1, p. 183
- 4 *In Christ - A New Community: The Proceedings of the Sixth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation*, ed. by A. Sovik, LWF, Geneva, 1977, p 176
- 5 *Budapest 1984*, note 1, p. 183
- 6 Gordon D. Kaufman, "Theologie für das Nuklearzeitalter", in *Ökumenische Existenz heute 2*, Munich, 1987, p. 31: "It has been the task of every generation of theologians, to reinterpret its religious tradition in the light of the respective historical situation"
- 7 Theology as "imaginative construction", cf. Gordon D. Kaufmann, note 6, p. 42
- 8 Cf. Götz Planer-Friedrich "Theology of Just Peace - An Ecumenical Task", see pp. 8-28 above
- 9 Cf. Dennis W. Frado, "Will Swords Become Plowshares?", in *lwi* No. 36/87, pp. 11-18; Lothar Brock, "Abrüstung und Entwicklung. Ein grosses Thema endgültig kleingeredet?" in *Der Überblick*, Vol. 23 (1987), No. 4, pp. 5-9.
- 10 In view of the so-called Third World the classic theory of war loses its plausibility. Peter Lock explains this by using the example of the US "low intensity conflict"; cf. Peter Lock, "Befreiung mit den Waffen der Herrschenden? Gesellschaftliche Gewalt und Kriege", in *Der Überblick*, Vol. 24 (1988), No. 1, pp. 49-52



- 11 *The Kairos Document*. A theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa, Catholic Institute for International Relations, Third World Theology series, 1986
- 12 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation 1986, *Osservatore Romano* No. 15 (932), 14 April 1986
- 13 For a positive assessment of the just war doctrine as "ethical yardstick" from the Lutheran point of view, cf. Trond Bakkevig, "The Doctrine of Just War - Relevance and Applicability", in *Studia Theologica*, Vol. 37 (1983), pp. 125-145
- 14 Cf. Hans-Richard Reuter, "Die Bergpredigt als Orientierung des Menschseins heute, in *ZEE*, Vol. 23 (1979), pp. 84-105
- 15 *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, transl. and ed. by Theodore G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959, p. 612
- 16 *In Christ - A New Community*, note 4, p. 180
- 17 Ulrich Duchrow, *Global Economy: A Confessional Issue for the Churches?* Geneva: WCC Publications, 1986, p. 101
- 18 Eckehart Lorenz (ed.), *Peace: What Can We Do? International Lutheran Contributions to Peace Ethics*, LWF Studies, 1984; Eckehart Lorenz and Theodor Strohm, *Das Wagnis engagierter Friedensarbeit. Internationale christliche Friedensorganisationen im Spannungsfeld zwischen christlichem Glauben und politischer Wirklichkeit*, Waldkirch: Waldkircher Verlagsgesellschaft, 1985
- 19 Cf. Roger Williamson, "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. The Message of the World Council of Churches", in *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1987). Especially for "covenanting" in the conciliar process cf. Heino Falcke, "Kirchen im Friedensbund Gottes. Ekklesiologische Aspekte des Friedensauftrags der Kirchen heute", in *Ev Th*, Vol. 45 (1985), pp. 348-366

- 20 Cf. Hans-Richard Reuter (ed.), *Konzil des Friedens. Beiträge zur ökumenischen Diskussion I*, Heidelberg: FEST, 1987
- 21 Wolfgang Huber, *Die Folgen christlicher Freiheit. Ethik und Theorie der Kirche im Horizont der Barmer Theologischen Erklärung*, Neukirchen, 1983, p. 191
- 22 Cf. statement of the VELKD of September 1982, *epd-Dokumentation* 55/1982, pp. 16f.
- 23 Cf. Memorandum of the "Plädoyer für eine ökumenische Zukunft: In Gerechtigkeit investieren", *epd-Entwicklungspolitik* 7/1988
- 24 *In Christ - A New Community*, note 4, p. 180
- 25 Harding Meyer/Günther Gassmann, "Rechtfertigung im ökumenischen Dialog", in *Ökumenische Perspektiven* 12, Frankfurt/M., 1987, p. 72
- 26 Conference of confessing communities: "Wort zum Friedensauftrag der Gemeinde Jesu Christi", in *Kirche und Frieden*, Texte der EKD 3, Hannover, 1982, p. 36
- 27 Cf. William G. Rusch, *Reception: An Ecumenical Opportunity*, LWF Report 22, Philadelphia/Geneva, 1988
- 28 The fact that the ecclesiastical structures of the large churches prevent a unified reception process up until today, does not become noticeable enough in W.G. Rusch's works since he describes the reception processes chronologically and at the end generalizes ecumenically
- 29 Gunnar Stålsett in *lwi* 9/1988, 17 March, p. 18
- 30 Hans-Martin Barth, "Die ekklesiologische Dimension der Ethik", in *Kerygma und Dogma* 34/1988, pp. 42-59
- 31 Konrad Raiser, "Einheit der Kirche und Einheit der Menschheit, Überlegungen zum Thema ökumenischer Theologie", in *ÖR* 35/1986, p. 36
- 32 Jürgen Moltmann (ed.), *Friedenstheologie - Befreiungstheologie*, Munich, 1988, p. 9



- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 10
- 34 C.F. v. Weizsäcker, *Die Zeit drängt*, Munich, 1986, p. 77
- 35 Cf. Heinz-Günther Stobbe, "Die römisch-katholische Kirche und die Idee eines Friedenskonzils", in Hans-Richard Reuter (ed.), *Konzil des Friedens*, note 20, pp. 61-99, esp. 78ff.
- 36 Cf. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's sermon in Fanö 1934: "Who will call us to peace so that the world will hear, will have to hear?... Only the one great Ecumenical Council of the holy church of Christ over all the world can speak out so that the world, though it gnash its teeth, will have to hear...", "The Church and the Peoples of the World", in *No Rusty Swords: From the Collected Works*, ed. and transl. by Edwin H. Robertson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1965, p. 291.

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